

# THE MATTOON MURDERS

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by Diane Sawyer

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## CHAPTER ONE

On the evening of April 27, 1968, five young brothers and sisters were found slain in and around an old combination corn crib-barn 8 miles NW of Mattoon, Illinois. Eleven hours after the bodies were discovered, an 18 year old high school boy was arrested near Eastern Illinois University in nearby Charleston as he walked down the center of the highway running through town. He offered no resistance and rather meekly put his hands in the air as two carloads of Charleston Police and E.I.U. Security Officers swooped down on him. An unloaded .22 caliber pistol was taken from his belt and 27 live bullets were found in the pocket of his oversized Army fatigue jacket. As he was arrested, he started to cry.

Police and State's Attorney's investigators had little trouble reconstructing the events leading up to the shootings. On the morning of April 27, around 9:00 A.M., 18 year old high school senior Thomas Charles "Charlie" Fuller, II, showed up at the old two-story farmhouse rented by the William Junior Cox family. He was wearing green jeans, a khaki shirt, brown leather boots, and an Army fatigue jacket littered with various patches and insignia. Slung low on his right thigh was a loaded .22 caliber Western-style pistol. In the pocket of his jacket, he carried nearly 40 loose rounds of ammunition in addition to the 6 already in his gun. It was not unusual for the boy to bring a gun to the Cox house; he often went hunting with one or more of the Cox boys and was known to bring up to 200 rounds of ammunition with him on hunting days.

On that Saturday morning in April, 11 members of the Cox family were home. William J. Cox, father of 12 children, was an out-of-work laborer who worked odd construction jobs in the spring and summer and lived on unemployment and welfare in the fall and

winter. His wife, Lydia, was also unemployed and spent her days at home. The nine children still with their parents ranged in age from Kenneth Winfred, 5, through Gary Lee, 7, Mary Catherine, 9, Theresa Jean, 10, Billie Colleen, 12, Patricia Ann, 14, Timothy, 15, and the 16 year old twins Edna Louise and Edward Louis. Three other children, two daughters and one son were married and raising families of their own.

Edna Louise was dating Fuller but, being the oldest girl, was also assigned the bulk of the household chores and spent much of this day with Billie Colleen cleaning the house, washing dishes, mopping the floor, and making beds. Fuller did not appear to be annoyed over Louise's preoccupation with the chores. He was used to waiting for her to finish her housework so he spent at least several hours before and after lunch walking in the woods around the house with Timmy and Edward Louis.

Around 2 o'clock in the afternoon, Louise went upstairs to clean the children's bedrooms. A short time later, Edward Louis grabbed her and wrestled her to the floor and four or five brothers and sisters piled on top of her, pulling her hair and punching her. She screamed for help and Fuller asked Mrs. Cox for permission to go upstairs—off-limits to him—to her aid. Mrs. Cox stood at the foot of the stairs, smiled, and refused permission. Fuller argued for a few minutes, then angrily stormed outside.

Louise joined him in the driveway after 5 or 10 minutes and demanded to know why he hadn't helped her. He apologized and told her of her mother's refusal to allow him upstairs. They talked for several minutes then went back inside so Louise could continue her chores.

At approximately 3:30 P.M., after the 3 boys returned from a fruitless hour-long rabbit hunt along the river behind the house, Mr. Cox and Timmy took the family's old pickup truck to the home of a relative 5 miles away. Perhaps 20 or 30 minutes later, Patricia leaned against the open flame of a gas stove and caught the back of her blouse on fire. The fire was quickly extinguished by Louise but Pat's back was burned and blistered. Mrs. Cox called a stepdaughter, Mrs. Marie Cline, to drive out from Mattoon and take them to the hospital emergency room. The stepdaughter and a neighbor woman, Irene Gilbert, brought the Gilbert car to the Cox house and all four women left the farm at approximately 4:05 P.M.

At approximately 4:20, Edward Louis and Gary Lee insisted that Fuller come out back of the corn crib-barn with them to shoot birds. Fuller refused at first but Louise finally intervened and told him to take the boys out back because they were bothering her and keeping her from doing her chores. Fuller reluctantly agreed and he

and the two boys went out the side door of the house. Mary Catherine, Kenneth Winfred, and Theresa Jean were also outside the house but out of sight of Louise and Billie who remained inside.

In about fifteen minutes, Fuller returned to the house and got a drink of water. Louise spoke to him as she worked, but he only muttered something about "shooting birds" and "I'm sorry, I'm really sorry." "He didn't talk like he used to," Louise was quoted as saying. "He was real quiet." He left the house for the second time and was gone about ten or fifteen minutes. When he returned the second time, he appeared to be agitated but denied to Louise that anything was wrong. He remained in the house for about ten minutes, until roughly 5:00 P.M., at which time the Gilbert car returned with Mrs. Cox and Pat. Fuller and Louise walked to the car together and he asked Mrs. Gilbert for a ride into town. She agreed and drove him as far as 33rd and DeWitt where they parted company. He started walking south.

For an hour and a half, the usual daily routine at the house continued. At 6:30 P.M., Mrs. Cox finally noticed that the other kids were not in the house and asked where they were. None of the three girls knew. Pat and Billie were ordered out to find them and tell them to come in for supper. The two sisters checked the nearby outhouse, garage, and sheds, then returned to report they couldn't find them. Mrs. Cox ordered Louise to search for them.

Louise walked straight for the corn crib, the only building not already searched. Just inside the doorway, she found the two girls lying face up with blood on their foreheads. She ran for the house, told her mother of her discovery, then made two phone calls. The first call was to Mr. Cox, telling him to come home at once. The second call was for an ambulance.

Mr. Cox returned home and ran to the corn crib where other family members were trying to revive the two girls with cold water. Sickened at what he saw, he left the crib and wandered to the far side of the building, the side furthest away from the house. He found the three boys there, all three lying face up in the tall grass, a small amount of blood on each forehead.

An ambulance arrived but its' equipment wouldn't be needed. All five were dead. Edward Louis had been shot six times, Gary Lee, 5 times, Kenneth Winfred, once. The two girls had each been shot three times. All the wounds were small and appeared to have been inflicted at close range.

Local police, County Sheriff's deputies, and State Police threw three rings around Coles County. Roadblocks and checkpoints were set up in and around Mattoon, with a second ring between Mattoon



and Charleston, and the third surrounding the entire county. Cars were stopped and searched, people fitting Fuller's description were closely checked for positive ID before being allowed to continue on their way. The law enforcement officials were hampered by one thing: they had only a single, poor snapshot of Fuller. Fuller was camera-shy and the only picture they could find was of incredibly poor quality. They had a general description of his clothes, hair color, height and weight, but there was no chance of broadcasting his picture to better their chances of an arrest. In effect, they knew who they were looking for but didn't know what he looked like. If he changed clothes and left the county. . . .

Fuller's mother, Lucy, was notified of the shootings at 7:00 P.M. She nearly went into hysterics when the fat, bald Assistant State's Attorney told her that her son was missing and they were "afraid he might be dead, but were still holding out hope that he was alive." The pudgy little man spent three hours with her, driving her around, looking for her son, hoping she could spot him still alive, could point him out to the police. As they drove, he pumped her for information about Fuller's friends, where he spent his free time, whose house he might be in in the event he was still alive.

As it turned out, Fuller made no effort to leave the county. He easily slipped through police roadblocks and roving patrols and walked the 12 miles from Mattoon to Charleston. He made no attempt to steal a car or hide. At some time during his walk, he unloaded his pistol and stuck it in the waistband of his pants. In Charleston, he again made no effort to hide. He wanted to be caught. He simply walked down the main road and allowed E.I.U. Security Officer George W. Bosler and Charleston Police Officer Jack L. Turner to make the arrest while another, unidentified and never-named officer backed them up.

At the County Jail, Fuller was stripped naked, given an old shirt and a too-large pair of pants to wear, and locked in a small 3-cell cellblock by himself. His clothing was sent to the State Crime Lab in Springfield where a dozen microscopic droplets of blood were found on his jacket. The droplets were too small to be typed and it was even possible that some of the stains may have been Fuller's, caused by the thickets lashing his arms as he made his way to Charleston.

A few hours after his arrest, Fuller was taken from the jail through an underground tunnel to the courthouse where he stood before Judge William J. Sunderman to be formally charged with five counts of murder. Bond was denied and he was returned to jail.

On May 3, 1968, a short preliminary hearing was held in the small

jury conference room behind the courtroom. The press and public were excluded. Fuller was represented by Public Defender William A. Cherikos. The State was represented by the excellent attorney Ralph Glenn. The hearing was only a formality: the evidence against Fuller was very great and there was no doubt that the preliminary hearing would end with enough information to ensure indictment by the Grand Jury. Throughout the hearing, Fuller sat quietly, listening attentively to each of the handful of witnesses. He showed no emotion and "acted more like a spectator than the defendant" to quote one of the deputies who escorted him.

In the office of the State's Attorney, the physical evidence began to pile up. Aerial, scene, and panorama photographs of the crime scene. Photographs of the victims. Six bags of clothing from Fuller and each victim. The Instamatic 104 camera Fuller had been wearing on a strap around his neck when he was arrested, plus the nine prints developed from the roll of film inside. The pistol. Ammunition in small plastic sacks. Five small white boxes of bullets dug from the bodies. Paraffin casts of his hands taken the morning he was arrested which failed to show any gunpowder stains on his hands. Miscellaneous sacks containing a pencil, sunglasses, and a comb. Flash bulbs for the camera. A leather pocket picture container with photos of Fuller, Louise, and several unidentified girls. Blood samples from the four oldest dead. Love letters from Fuller to Louise. Statements of witnesses.

The State's case was impressive simply because of the ease with which it was solved. They were confident of an easy conviction. They lacked only one thing: a motive.

On the 13th of May, Fuller was officially arraigned on all five charges. The State's Attorney announced that he would seek the death penalty.

On the 20th of May, Fuller was given a second defense attorney. Public Defender Cherikos complained that the murder case would take all his time and keep him from defending other indigents in the county. Judge Harry I. Hannah agreed with Cherikos and appointed a young attorney, Whitney Dove Hardy, to assist in Fuller's defense. In a matter of only a few weeks, Hardy became Fuller's chief defender with Cherikos relegated to a vague supporting role in between his representation of a hundred other Coles County defendants.

Rumors in the county were rampant. Word of mouth rumors had Louise pregnant by Fuller, Fuller and Louise as co-conspirators in the killings, even Fuller and his 9-month pregnant sister as co-conspirators. Some indignant citizens called the jail and demanded Full-

er's immediate execution. Others demanded to know why "that boy" had been arrested but not "that girl." Several anonymous callers claimed that Fuller had been given LSD by Edward Louis (or Edna Louise, depending on the caller) and demanded a clean-up of narcotics in the county. A few threatened to shoot Fuller on sight while others called to say they were praying for him.

Following a long, detailed conversation with Fuller in early June, Hardy decided a defense of insanity was their best hope. A competency hearing had already been held and Fuller was judged competent to stand trial, but the examiners had not been allowed to enter the area of the crime itself and Hardy—who had a near-adoration of the field of psychiatry not generally shared by his fellow attorneys—set in motion a course that would have Fuller examined by not only some of the best psychiatrists and psychologists in Illinois but in Kansas at the Menninger Foundation Clinic as well. When the interviews and tests were done, they amounted to well over a thousand pages of transcripts and reports. Also taken as part of the examination: several electroencephalograms—brain wave readings. The first, in Springfield's Memorial Hospital, detected diencephalic epilepsy. Diercephalic epilepsy is a form of epilepsy which causes the sufferer to fly into a rage during a seizure. The finding was a boost to the defense.

In mid-September of 1968, Fuller, escorted by Coles County Sheriff Mike Curtis, Investigator Edward Kallis, and a Deputy Sheriff, traveled to Topeka, Kansas by car. More brain wave readings, skull X-rays, blood tests, detailed mental and physical examinations. Included towards the end of the six days of tests: nearly eight hours of video taped interviews between Dr. Joseph Satten of the Menninger Clinic and Fuller. Two hours of the taped interviews were conducted while Fuller was under the influence of sodium amytal, a so-called truth serum. Among items turned over to the doctors at the Clinic: 3 full-length novels and a journal-diary written by Fuller.

On October 14, 1968, the Fuller murder case came to trial. From the 14th through the 19th, examination of prospective jurors went on from 9:00 A.M. until after 5:00 P.M. Sunday, the 20th, the courtroom was closed. A jury of 12 men and women was finally chosen on the afternoon of the 22nd and 4 alternates were chosen by noon of the 23rd.

Then there was a surprise.

Following the noon recess, Fuller's attorneys suddenly announced that he wished to withdraw the previous plea of not guilty and enter a plea of guilty to all five indictments. Before Judge Harry I. Hannah



allowed the change of plea, he very carefully admonished Fuller as to his rights under the law. Hannah spent nearly thirty minutes painstakingly explaining the entire situation to the defendant, not only making sure that Fuller understood exactly the consequences of the change of plea, but also determined not to be reversed by a higher court on some small technicality. He covered every conceivable aspect of protecting the defendant's rights during the plea change and when all parties fully understood the consequences, he allowed the change.

Fuller pleaded guilty to all five counts.

A hearing in aggravation and mitigation was set for November 4 at 10:00 A.M. In effect, it was a mini trial, both sides using much of the case they had planned to introduce at trial, but the big difference was that the defendant was already guilty and had pleaded guilty. The hearing was held solely to determine the sentence.

The defense presented their witnesses first. Lt. Colonel Harry Tuma, the ROTC instructor at Mattoon High School, testified that Fuller was a "good student" and a "bright cadet" he was proud to have taught. Fuller's parents, Tom and Lucy, testified that they'd had problems with him, that he was worried about being drafted and sent to Viet Nam, that he suffered terrible nightmares, but had tenderly cared for his three year old brother, Sean, who adored him. Dr. Frederic A. Gibbs, a leading expert in the field of electroencephalographic readings, testified that Fuller was subject to diencephalic epilepsy, a form of epilepsy which causes the patient to explode in a rage during a seizure and then be unable to recall what happened afterward. Dr. Joseph P. Satten and Dr. Robert Schulman of the Menninger Clinic diagnosed the defendant as suffering from latent schizophrenia, testifying that he was very intelligent but showed poor judgment and lacked flexibility to adjust to his environment and further had a distorted perception of reality. The video tapes were played in open court but were of poor quality and difficult to understand at several points; but Fuller recounted a small portion of his life and openly discussed the killings that he "must have done" although he could not recall many details. Towards the end of the fourth tape, while under the influence of sodium amytal used to break down the mental blocks preventing him from remembering all of the occurrences of the 27th of April, Fuller broke down and cried. He cried for 3 or 4 minutes before Dr. Satten calmed him down and ended the interview.

The defense placed into evidence five books written by Robert E. Howard dealing with the mythical super barbarian Conan. Psychiatric testimony indicated Fuller idolized Conan and may have tried

to pattern his own life after the barbarian's. Also placed in evidence were three of his hand-written novels, several poems, and the journal-diary.

The State's presentation was a little longer but almost seemed like an anti-climax. Fuller was already guilty and the testimony of Ed Kallis, George Bosler, and Jack Turner was incidental. State psychiatrist Groves B. Smith characterized Fuller as a schizoid personality, testifying that Fuller had the ability to coordinate his thinking, but refused to do so. Billie, Louise, and Timmy testified that Fuller had been their friend but had a dislike for Edward Louis. They regarded him as a "nice boy." Mr. and Mrs. Cox did not testify and neither did Patricia, an epileptic.

On the 13th of November, it was over. The only "motive" ever alleged centered around a weird idea that Fuller may have thought he was helping Louise from the oppression of her parents and brothers and sisters. The "motive" was never a satisfactory one to the State or Defense but since Fuller never took the stand and never fully cooperated with the psychiatrists who interviewed him, it was all they had.

Judge Hannah set December 10 for the official sentencing, allowing himself nearly four weeks to read all of the defense exhibits, view the video tapes again, read the volumes of psychiatric testimony, and make the decision either to imprison or kill an 18 year old boy.

The courtroom was packed on the 10th. Many people had come only to see the "little boy," as one newspaper reporter described him. Others came in hopes of seeing someone sentenced to death. The Cox family was present, sitting on a bench directly behind the ABC, NBC, CBS, AP, UPI, and local news reporters. Fuller's two sisters were also present in the body of the courtroom while his parents sat directly behind him at the defense table where they had been allowed to sit since the start of jury selection in October. Not present: State's Attorney Ralph Glenn who did not bother to show up, sending his pudgy Assistant instead.

Judge Hannah assumed the bench and spent nearly twenty minutes reading his Memorandum Order outlining the entire case and the reasons upon which he rested his decision. When he was finished with his reasoning for not applying the death penalty in this case, he had Fuller stand before him and sentenced the former high school senior to five terms of 70 to 99 years, with two of the sentences to run consecutively to the other three sentences.

Fuller was escorted to a small legal library room next to the jury room and held there for nearly an hour. His parents and sisters

were allowed to join him to say goodbye. Security was heavy around the room and the reaction was instant when Mr. Cox suddenly exploded in anger at the sentence and took a few steps towards the area where Fuller was being held. Family members and police restrained him and escorted him from the courthouse, still screaming that he wanted death for Fuller. At one point, Cox charged a reporter who got too close to him.

Fuller remained at the courthouse for an hour, allowing all the spectators and family members to leave. Then, handcuffed to Sheriff Curtis and flanked by two other large deputies, he was paraded out the front door of the courthouse to allow waiting reporters their first chance at getting him on film. He was hustled into a waiting car which sped off with a second vehicle as escort.

People watching the television news that night thought Fuller was taken directly to prison from the courthouse. He wasn't. The two cars circled a half-mile away and returned to the jail where Fuller spent another hour waiting for the paperwork of his commitment to be completed. Finally, from the jail he was taken to downtown Mattoon by Sheriff Curtis, George Bosler, and another deputy, where still more paperwork was hurriedly signed and notarized. For the long trip to Joliet, there was no second car as escort.

Fuller was taken to the Diagnostic Depot at Joliet where he spent 90 minutes being processed as a new arrival before he was cuffed to a waist chain and moved again to Stateville Prison a few miles north of Joliet. At Stateville, he was placed in a bare strip cell in the Detention Hospital with no clothing other than two canvas strips a guard referred to as blankets. He was fed his first prison meal and told that he would stay in the strip cell until a psychiatrist examined him "in a few days." But, the following morning, an elderly guard came to his cell and asked him if he felt like committing suicide. Fuller replied he did not and the guard told him that Sheriff Curtis had described him as suicidal at Joliet and the guards on the night shift at Stateville had placed him in a strip cell for that reason, but "those county folks run their county jail and I run this detention hospital." The kind guard let him out, got clothes for him, and placed him in a cell with another man who, by coincidence, was also from Mattoon.

Fuller stayed at the Detention Hospital until the 20th of February, 1969, when he was transferred to Menard. Few prisoners under the age of 21 were held at Menard, but upon the recommendation of a psychiatrist and a psychologist, an exception was made. Once at Menard, he was assigned to the prison library where he worked until June 20, 1974 when he transferred to the inmate commissary



as bookkeeper of the individual inmate accounts. In October of 1977, he transferred again to the newly opened employee's commissary located in the Administration Building. He held this third job until September of 1980.

On March 8, 1978, he had his first parole hearing. His request for parole was quietly heard and denied and his case was continued for two years. On December 19, 1979, he was again eligible for parole. This time, the Cox family was notified of the hearing, and they gathered 92 letters and more than 32,000 signatures on a petition to the Parole Board opposing his parole. He was again denied parole and his case was continued for three years.

Two new, medium security prisons were opened at Hillsboro and Centralia in September and October of 1980. Fuller applied for a transfer to Hillsboro and was not only approved to go, but was put on the first busload of 50 to arrive at the prison. Two days after his arrival, he was assigned to the commissary as clerk. Construction on the prison was continuing with well over 100 construction workers still inside the facility and security was, and is, very tight to prevent escapes.

Around Christmas of 1980, someone notified the Mattoon Journal-Gazette that Fuller was at Hillsboro. The article the paper carried on the 26th of December was on page 5, worth noting but not all that newsworthy since his case was nearly 13 years old.

But one man wasn't about to let the case die from memory. Mr. Cox called the prison several times demanding that Fuller be sent back to maximum security Menard, not knowing that Fuller had spent only a little more than a year in maximum security before having his security reduced to medium. Fuller could never have been considered for Hillsboro if he hadn't been in medium security to begin with. Prison officials politely declined Mr. Cox's demands. Cox then went to the Director of the Department of Corrections. Here, too, he was turned down. Officials sympathized with him, but explained that Fuller's prison record was excellent, pointing out that he was such a well-behaved and hard-working inmate that he had been selected for the first load of 50 out of 12,000 inmates in the state to choose from. Cox wasn't satisfied and enlisted the aid of Charleston Democratic Representative Larry Stuffle who publicly complained of the transfer by the Republican-controlled Department of Corrections. Stuffle suggested another petition as the best way to move Fuller back to Menard.

It was after Fuller's second appearance before the Parole Board that I became interested in the case. I'd known Lucy Fuller for some time and knew she had a son in prison, but we were only casual

acquaintances and had never discussed why he was in prison. What attracted my attention was the outpouring of hatred directed at Fuller. I had no sympathy for him myself, but I felt sorry for his mother and could not understand why his case, seldom mentioned in newspapers anymore other than in central and southern Illinois small-town papers would generate such actions by the people in Mattoon. I had seen the petitions stuck up on walls in stores and restaurants in Mattoon and had even signed them once, but I signed only because other people with me at the time were signing them. I didn't even know Fuller or fully know the background of the case. I had never seen any member of the Cox family, either. I saw the Mattoon and Charleston newspaper clippings which seemed confused, referring to the "shotgun slayings" in one instance and "pistol killings" in another. Even Fuller's name was wrong in some of the articles. The one thing that really puzzled me was the attempt by Mr. Cox to keep the tragic occurrences of April 27, 1968, in the limelight.

As a journalist, I wanted to know more about this strange story. I wanted to know who this man I'd signed a petition against really is. I wanted to know why he was in prison. I wanted to know what makes most 18 year old boys grow up to hold jobs and raise families while a small handful end up in prison. I wanted to know the truth.

My quest took me from Arkansas to Illinois to Maine to Texas. I interviewed nearly 75 childhood friends, former school teachers, family members, and Illinois Department of Corrections personnel. I was allowed to go through the large boxes of Fuller's personal belongings kept by his mother in a spare room of her house. I held in my hands some of the toys he had played with as a child. I sorted through a huge box full of toy soldiers, model planes, tanks, and guns. I poured over the titles of nearly 500 books in his personal library and spent nearly 5 hours going through 3 large photo albums filled with pictures of him and his family. A smaller photo album contained pictures of himself with Louise, Louise by herself, and even 4 photos of the Cox children and their father taken on Christmas Day, 1967. The photos of the younger Cox family members have never appeared in any newspaper and included all of the deceased and several of the still-living children. I even managed to get the first face-to-face interviews with Fuller himself at Menard and Hillsboro prisons. I'd already read Mr. Cox's version of the case in the Mattoon and Charleston papers. I wanted to hear what Fuller had to say.

## CHAPTER TWO

The handsome, 18 year old sailor was on leave in Portland, Maine, in December of 1942 when he saw the pretty young girl with the long reddish-brown hair uncomfortably cornered by three other sailors as she walked home from a movie late one evening. The sailors never touched her, but crowded around asking: What's your name? You wanna' write me? Can I have a picture? You wanna' go for a little drink? The girl stood her ground, unsure of what to do, frightened of the men but fascinated by the attention. She clutched her small purse to her breasts and jerked her green eyes from side to side searching for a friend. All she saw were the grinning men with the beer-laden breath.

"Why don't you assholes move on?" the short, stocky sailor said as he pushed through them and grabbed her arm. "She's with me."

The girl stared in amazement as the lone sailor clutched her elbow and glided her out of the ring of men and up the sidewalk.

"I'll get you away from here," he whispered. "Where do you live?"

She glanced back over her shoulder and saw the other men muttering to themselves and looking at her and the man at her side. Then, incredibly, thankfully, they turned and walked away. She started breathing normally again and looked at the sailor. He was a handsome young man, a little taller than she, maybe 5'8", dark complexioned, with thick black hair and deep blue eyes. He smiled and all the tension seemed to melt away inside her.

He walked her home and they talked and finally, at her doorstep, they exchanged addresses and promised to write. World War II at sea was in its' full, murderous fury in '42 and the little man from Gays, Illinois, Thomas Charles Fuller, returned to his ship and added the name of Lucy Mae Breen to the list of girls he was already writing.

Tom and Lucy wrote off and on for the next two years. He learned that she was one of five children born to Irish immigrant Andrew Breen and his American-born wife Izetta Belle Robbins. The Breens were living in Portland temporarily but owned a house Andrew had built himself in the tiny fishing hamlet of Port Clyde, Maine, up the coast. Andrew was a common laborer, a granite quarry worker, a painter, an all-round handy man. Izetta also worked odd jobs and cared for the couple's four year old daughter, Nancy Glenda. The other Breen daughters, Gertrude Louise and Alice Stasia, worked at the huge airplane factory of Pratt and Whitney in E. Hartford, Conn. Their only son, Lloyd Kenneth, was with the Coast Guard at a place called Guadalcanal. Lucy was working wherever she could find work, waiting for her application to Pratt and Whitney to be accepted so she could "get a good paying job." Tom's letters to her were censored but she learned that he was one of eleven children born to Dormethus and Mary Elizabeth Smith Fuller of Gays, Ill. One of his brothers, John Dudley, died at birth in 1928. Two others, Theresa Pauline, aged 11, and Carl Frederick, aged 2½, died of diphtheria in 1933. A fourth child, Nellie Bernice, was born on Christmas day, 1918. She died 19 days later. A younger sister, Mary Catherine, lived at home while his fourth sister, Ella Elizabeth, was now married and the mother of two daughters. Three of Tom's brothers, Joseph Samuel, Harry Kenneth, and Ralph Leo, were in military service "somewhere" while 30 year old Roy Edward was named but never placed in any particular town or occupation. It would be years before Lucy discovered that Roy Edward was in a mental institution in Jacksonville, Illinois, where he'd been committed after repeated outbursts of violence against his mother and others. Roy Edward would die in Jacksonville on December 10, 1967. Exactly one year to the day after Roy's death, another Fuller family member not yet born in 1942 would take his place in an institution following an act of violence.

When the war was all but over, Tom was transferred from a ship to a desk in New York state. One by one, he and the other girls on his mailing list stopped writing each other until only Lucy continued to correspond with him. As they learned more about each other and dated as frequently as he could get a pass off-base, they came to the conclusion that they were in love and absolutely perfect for each other. In Manchester, Conn., on January 27, 1946, they were married in a church ceremony attended by a small handful of relatives and friends.

With the end of the war and the return of millions of veterans, tens of thousands of working women were fired from their jobs

and replaced by the vets. Lucy was one of those women. The sudden loss of the weekly paycheck hurt, but it was only temporary. In April of '46, Tom was finally discharged from the Navy and he and Lucy moved into a small house with Alice in E. Hartford. Landing a job with Pratt and Whitney at \$40.00 a week, Tom settled down to an accounting job he did not particularly like. Lucy settled down to life as a housewife.

At 6 A.M. on September 9, 1946, Lucy was admitted to the hospital maternity ward in Manchester to deliver their first child. Tom spent several hours with her, then tired of waiting and went to a nearby tavern with a neighbor woman where he spent the rest of the day getting drunk. He desperately wanted a son. At 6 P.M., their first daughter was born. Mary Belle Fuller. 8lbs. and 5 oz. Tom was visibly upset at first but calmed down after viewing the baby girl for the first time. She had the thick black hair and deep blue eyes of her father, but her skin was like sun-bleached ivory. She was a beautiful child. They nicknamed her Cooky.

Cooky was a good baby, quiet, quick to learn, easily potty-trained, but the adults soon had her spoiled by all the attention they gave her. When her hair grew long enough, Lucy began giving her a series of permanents that would continue for the next twelve years. Lucy was very much a fan of the movie industry and, almost from the time she could walk, Cooky had Shirley Temple curls, Shirley Temple dresses, and a pair of gold tap shoes so she could learn to dance. To this day, Cooky can't watch a Shirley Temple movie on TV without getting nauseated.

Tom never cared much for New England. "It's too damned cold," he said over and over again. When his father wrote in July of '48 that his health wasn't good and he needed Tom's help, Tom and Lucy and little Cooky sold their meager household furnishings and took a train to Mattoon, Illinois. They stayed overnight at a hotel so Lucy could "freshen up a bit" before meeting Tom's parents.

"It was a Sunday morning," Lucy says. "We took a taxi the 6 miles to Gays and I can remember that road even today—how straight and monotonous it was. I was used to the curves and hills of New England and I took an immediate dislike to Illinois. When we got to the Fuller's, Mrs. Fuller got right on the phone and called in all the clan and they all came to a big dinner. Eighteen of us were there. I'll never forget that, either. I was always shy and I felt so alone with all these strange people. I was very conscious of my Maine accent and when I pronounced certain words they all laughed at me.

"Lunch was a disaster. Tom passed me a bowl of hominy and I

whispered: 'What is that?' He yelled 'What is that? You don't know what that is?' and they all laughed at me again. Later on, somebody gave Cooky some cottage cheese and she promptly threw up and that just kind of topped off the whole day for me."

Tom and Lucy moved into a tiny bedroom in the Fuller's small house. Tom helped his dad run Fuller's Pool Room in Gays, tried his hand at selling Singer vacuums and sewing machines door to door, painted grain elevators and barns, drove a Meadow Gold milk truck from Mattoon to Pana, and worked as a fireman on the Illinois Central railroad. None of the jobs seemed to hold his interest for very long and he appeared restless. Lucy, meanwhile, was "being driven crazy" by Tom's mother.

"Mrs. Fuller was an insanely jealous woman," Lucy recalls. "Whenever she, Dormethus, and I were home together and she had to use the toilet out back, she'd hold it as long as possible and then run like hell out and back so she wouldn't leave me alone with her husband for more than a minute. She treated all her daughters-in-law the same way.

"They didn't have a regular bathroom inside, so they used a huge galvanized tub in their kitchen with a curtain drawn between the dining room and the kitchen. She'd sit by the door and hold a big bath towel to pass to the men when they were through. She didn't want anyone near her menfolk and seemed to resent me and Tom sleeping together in the same bed. I put up with it as long as I could then insisted we get our own place."

In March of '49, they bought some second-hand furniture and moved into a 3-room apartment over Gammill's grocery store in Gays. Lucy was ecstatic at finally having "her own home." She remembers experiencing a feeling of great freedom and happiness.

A second child was conceived.

The winter of '49 was rough for the Fuller's. Tom was working whatever job he could get no matter how little the pay and they ate as many meals as possible at their relatives' homes.

In November, Dormethus Fuller died suddenly. He left behind his wife, seven children, and five granddaughters.

On the 27th of December, 1949, at 9:00 P.M., in the delivery room of the Mattoon Memorial Hospital, Tom Fuller got his wish. A son was born.

Thomas Charles Fuller II. 7lbs., 9oz. 20" long. Green-brown eyes. Dark brown hair. Fair skin.

The entire Fuller clan celebrated. A grandson. A male child to carry on another generation of Fullers. A guarantee that the Fuller name would not die out. Little Tommy. Chucky. Chuck.



Tom was very happy and proud. He stopped spending so much time in local taverns and began paying more attention to his family. Even though paychecks were erratic at times, the home situation improved enough during the next year to allow Tom to join his brother Ralph in Chicago at an optometric school. Lucy and the children remained in Gays.

"It was still touch and go," Lucy told me. "We ate at Tom's relatives a lot until I was too embarrassed to go any more. The kids and I got by on potatoes and green beans for days on end and I occasionally did a little evening shopping in nearby corn fields to break the monotony of our diet. Tom was going to school in the daytime and working in a bakery at night, and on weekends he'd bring a suitcase full of day-old donuts home with him. It was the only time we ever got a real treat."

Lucy was pregnant for the third time when she, Cooky, and Chuck traveled to Maine to visit her family.

"It was the first time my parents had seen Chuck and they hadn't seen Cooky in three years. We spent most of a month there and the kids really enjoyed walking in the woods with their grandfather. Chuck was nineteen months old at the time and got excited whenever he found pretty rocks at the beach or pinecones in the woods.

"One day, we had a picnic in the front yard of my parent's home. It was too foggy and damp at the beach so we cooked under a huge tree next to the driveway. Everything was fine for a while and we adults were talking and feeding the kids at the same time. I gave Chuck a potato chip and then a swallow of orange ade and the chip got wet and laid in his throat. I had him in my arms and was talking to my mother when he stiffened suddenly. I immediately knew what was wrong but I couldn't get his throat clear. Mother panicked as she saw Chuck turn blue and go limp and she was screaming 'Oh, you've lost him, Lucy! You've lost him!' I was screaming for help and my sister Alice grabbed his jaw and opened his mouth and dipped one of her long fingers deep into his throat and out came the chip. Chuck started breathing again in short, sharp little breaths. I was crying—almost hysterical—and all I could do was hug him and hug him and cry and cry. I'll never forget that. Never."

A railroad line passed 50 yards in front of the Fuller apartment in Gays and little Chucky would jump to his feet and climb atop the couch to peer out the window as each train passed. "Too-too," he grinned, pointing at each train as they rumbled past, sometimes waving at the engine and cars as if they were people. Occasionally, he scrambled to the top of the couch too quickly and went flying over the back to crash on the floor behind.

"Tom didn't like me to pick him up," Lucy says. "He always said 'Don't baby him. I want a man out of him, not a crybaby.' Chuck would come crying to me, wanting to be picked up and held when he was hurt, but if Tom was home I only caressed him a little and told him to be more careful next time. If Tom was in Chicago, I'd hold him and quiet him down but I didn't want to argue with Tom so things were different when he was home each weekend.

"I don't want you to think Tom never played with him. He did many times. But he was not very physical with him. They wrestled when Chuck was small but Tom always wanted him to be independent, called him 'my little man,' and made fun of him if he wanted to be carried.

"With Cooky, Tom was the opposite. He carried her, babied her, pampered her. So did I. But Cooky was a girl and Tom felt that girls should be touched more and cared for more intently. When they got older, Chuck was allowed free rein while we kept Cooky close to us. Neither system seems to have worked very well."

Chuck was playing under a heavy wooden and glass coffee table in the living room one day in October of 1951 when he heard a train roaring down the tracks. He abandoned his toys and jumped up in such a rush that he cracked the back of his head against the underside of the table. Almost immediately, his scalp split open and blood soaked his hair. He screamed.

"I ran to him and nearly fainted when I saw the blood. I sent Cooky downstairs to get Mac Gammill, one of the owners of the store, and he came up instantly. We put ice packs and cold compresses on the wound and finally stopped the bleeding. I was really shaken up but I had no way to get to a hospital and no money for a doctor. I was afraid he'd fractured his skull or gotten brain damage but he seemed to be all right after an hour or so."

Little Chuck fell off the couch, cracked his head on furniture, tumbled down the stairs, and banged his head against door openings while riding piggy-back with his father nearly two dozen times that family members remember. Apparently, none of the accidents caused any serious damage. Several electroencephalogram readings taken to read the functioning of his brain showed "no apparent physiological damage." The damage done to him in his childhood years was similar to the damage nearly all little boys suffer while growing up in a rough-and-tumble little boys' world.

Tom's mother—at Ella's insistence and against her own better wishes—moved in with Lucy on November 20, so she could care for Cooky and Chucky when the Fuller's third child was born. She didn't have long to wait. At 4:00 A.M. on the 23rd, Lucy was awakened

with labor pains and grandmother Fuller called Ralph in Mattoon to drive her to the hospital. While they waited for Ralph to arrive, Lucy got to listen as grandmother Fuller went into her time-worn speech about delivering her own eleven children at home and my aren't modern women such sissies that they have to go to a fancy hospital and breathe gas so it doesn't hurt.

At the hospital, Dr. John D. Hardinger, the doctor who had delivered Chuck two years before, discovered that the baby was sideways so he turned her in the womb. Delivery was slow but not painful. ("It was really a nice feeling.") At 4:00 P.M., Candace Lee Fuller, all 9 lbs, 5½ oz. of her, arrived.

"Oh, another girl," Tom said with a slight smile when he received the telegram in Chicago.

Candy had the dark brown hair, the green-brown eyes, and the fair skin which made her look a lot like her brother.

Chuck didn't know what to think about Candy. He was fascinated by her, by the way she looked at him, by the way she smiled at him, but he soon discovered that she took a lot of the attention that had formerly gone to him. He decided he might not like her afterall.

"He was jealous of her," Lucy recalls. "He never seemed to mind when I fed or bathed or changed her but if I played with her, I had to play with him, too, or he'd have a fit. When she cried for no apparent reason and I went to her, he seemed to resent it. He tolerated her and even helped feed her a few times but he was very jealous of the attention Tom and I gave her."

As he had with Cooky, Tom took a lot of time caring for Candy. Chuck was never ignored, he was simply expected to be more independent, less in need of comforting, more confident in his own ability to get by in the world without hanging on to Mommy and Daddy. There was nothing wrong with wanting his son to have these attributes, but they were a little rough for a boy not yet two years old.

During the last few months of his schooling in Chicago, Tom saw a lot of ads for opticians and liked one in particular. Texas State Optical not only sounded like a good company but it was also further away from the cold weather he had come to dispise. By the time he graduated in January of 1952, T.S.O. had already accepted him as an employee and offered to pay his moving costs if he would come right away. He lost no time in selling off the furniture and loading clothing and children into their salmon-colored Dodge.

"Tom wanted to go where it was hot. He got his wish. We moved to Baytown, near Houston, and the heat and humidity made me

sick. I never did get used to it. Then, to top it all off, they have cockroaches two inches long and I can't stand any bugs in my house. I called the exterminator time and time again but they just kept coming back after a few months. I still hate Texas."

They rented a house for a year, then put a down-payment on a 6-room, 1-bath house at 803 S. Circle Dr.

"We lived there for six years," Lucy says. "Chuck and Candy shared a room for about a year until he started fussing and then demanding that we 'get her out of here.' His room was the smallest anyway so we got the girls twin beds and put them in one room and really fixed his up nice. One whole wall had shelves to the ceiling on either side of an attached desk, plus cabinets and storage areas for all his toys. On another wall, he had brown peg boards with removable hooks to hang his cap pistols, cowboy hats, toys, all sorts of things. Plus, his bed was built-in to the floor and wall. It was real nice and he loved it."

Chuck Fuller's first few years in Texas seem to be problem free except for two things.

"He and Candy just could not get along. She used to follow him everywhere and adored and imitated him, but he used to reject her attention quite frequently. Sometimes they'd play together for days on end with no problems, then suddenly break into fights. I usually spanked both of them if either was hurt."

Was he particularly violent towards her?

"Oh, no. I don't remember him ever hurting her physically but he would tease her unmercifully and pick on her if he felt like it. What really bugged him was people telling him that they looked alike. Candy would smile because she looked up to him but he hated it. He pushed her down a few times that I remember but Tom would give him a terrible spanking if he hurt her and Chuck knew it, so he was careful how he acted towards her. I think it was pretty close to the normal kind of sibling rivalry that most kids show. They both wanted to be Number One in my and Tom's eyes and competed for attention but I don't recall any instance of Chuck taking advantage of his strength and age to do her any real harm. As a matter of fact," Lucy laughs, "he was picking on her one day and she clobbered him with a rock the size of my fist. He screamed bloody murder and I spanked her for it, but he eased up on her after that and didn't seem to pick on her as much anymore."

"I also saw him or heard of him going to her rescue a dozen or so times when other boys tried to bother her. He expected her to put up with his own harassment, but he wouldn't tolerate anyone else doing it."

"The second problem was his speech: nobody could understand a word he said outside of the immediate family. And here, Cooky took revenge for Candy by taunting and mocking him. He'd get so mad, he'd get red in the face and ball his fists but Cooky could whip him any day of the week until he was 10 or 11 years old, so he had to take the abuse or take the abuse and get whipped, too."

Special speech lessons at night at the public school straightened out most of his speech but he still occasionally mispronounces words or stutters when he gets excited.

He attended Ashbel Smith Elementary School in Baytown from September of 1956 until the end of May, 1959. Most of his teachers are gone now, either retired and moved away or dead, but his records indicate an excellent performance in some classes, very good in others. His lowest grade was a B, and more than half were A's and A+'s. His IQ as measured in the third grade was rated at 120. His art teacher discovered that Chuck was an excellent painter and a quick learner who centered his attention on colorful drawings of prehistoric dinosaurs and volcanoes. With a little practice, he could even pronounce the names of each dinosaur and describe its' size and diet. There are no entries of disciplinary action against him during this period and he seems to have been just another little boy in elementary school.

Things weren't going quite so well for Tom and Lucy. They had a lot of nice friends and Tom was involved with the V. F. W., the Optimist's Club, and various youth groups where he quickly became commander of this and vice president of that and even ran for the city council but lost. In fact, Tom was devoting so much time to the organizations that he soon had little time for the one organization he had founded—his family. He was also drinking heavily but managed to keep his cool when drunk.

"I don't like beer and I hate the hard liquors," Lucy says. "Whenever we went out, I'd drink a Coke and Tom would have his Falstaff or Lone Star beer and by the end of the night I'd be going to the ladies room every fifteen minutes and he'd be drunk. He never got violent in the early years, never hit me or the kids, but we'd argue constantly about his never being home, his drinking, and all the time he was spending at one club or another. All that plus the fact that I hated Texas made me miserable.

"Finally, one night when he was drunk, he talked real nice to me and said, 'If you want, phone Bob Beverly in the morning and put the house up for sale.' Bob was in real estate and a friend in one of the clubs we belonged to. So, next morning, I kept quiet until Tom went to work and I did just that. Tom came home that

night and said, "You knew I was drunk and I didn't really mean it." But we talked things over for a couple of hours and he finally agreed to move."

Just before they left Texas, Tom put a long article in the Baytown Sun newspaper and regretted that "his health" forced him to leave so many friends behind whom he would "always remember." He thanked them all for their friendship and apologized for having to move.

"There was not one mention of wife or family," Lucy says bitterly. "I had a lot of friends, too, but Tom liked to pretend he wasn't married. He was very self-centered."

The family moved to Port Clyde, Maine, and lived with Lucy's parents for a few months before Tom landed a job with another optician in Lewiston. The new job didn't work out and the family moved again in a few months to Manchester, Conn.

"I thought he was satisfied here, but he wasn't. He'd been secretly writing T.S.O. since early winter and told me one day that they wanted him as a branch manager of one of their offices in Bryan. I cried and pleaded with him but it didn't do any good. For the fourth time in eight months, we had to pack the kids in our Buick and move.

"Our furniture didn't arrive for eleven days and we stayed in two huge double rooms at a motel during that time. We put the kids in school—it was their fourth school that year—and I got on a couple of bowling teams so I could begin to meet people."

Tom also made friends: drinking buddies at the Elks and a handful of other clubs plus a number of nice looking young women he began seeing when Lucy wasn't nearby.

"I'll never know for sure how long he cheated on me. I suspected him of it in Baytown but I couldn't prove it. I proved it in Bryan."

Lucy tailed Tom a number of times, watching him as he made his rounds at night. The taverns, the Elks where the town's worst alcoholics hung out, the bowling alley. The girls.

"As manager of the T.S.O. office, he did all the hiring and firing. It wasn't long before the five or six girls working for him were all in their late teens or twenties, and attractive."

Lucy did what she could to keep Tom at home, but he was a wanderer at heart. He liked his beer and he liked his parties. Staying at home with a family was for someone else.

"I put up with it as long as I could. We fought and argued over and over. Nothing I did or said seemed to have any effect on him. He just kept drinking and jumping into bed with his workers."

One of those workers stands out in her memory.



"She was about 5'9", with long honey blond hair and blue eyes, rather pretty except for her hawk-like nose. She seemed to be his favorite for a while and I thought it was beginning to get serious. I spoke to him about it but he denied everything. She used to smile at me everytime she saw me. I hated her."

The woman's smile vanished early one evening.

"I showed up at the office just as it was closing. Tom was busy totalling the days' receipts and locking up the various offices. I walked to the back of the building just to see who was there and met her in the doorway of the coat room. She seemed surprised to see me and then slowly grinned at me to my face. I don't know what happened next. I remember thinking about swinging at her and then I was on top of her on the floor with my thighs around her waist beating the hell out of her. I remember hearing a woman screaming—it must have been her because it sure the hell wasn't me—and then Tom was pulling me off her. He was very pale. He seemed frightened."

What about the woman?

Lucy grinned in satisfaction, "Tom had bought me a beautiful dinner ring for my birthday a year before. It had 17 diamonds in an oval pattern and was about half an inch long from diamond to diamond. When I swung at her, the ring caught her face and ripped it open from her cheekbone to the cartilage of her nose. She still has a scar there."

The family situation continued its' ups and downs as Lucy tried to save the marriage Tom seemed determined to destroy. They bought a nice 6—room house on North Avenue in 1962 and seemed content for a while. The two girls again shared a room while Chuck had another to himself.

"I should have paid more attention to the kids, I guess," Lucy says quietly. "But I was so busy keeping track of Tom that I really didn't have much time for the little ones. If Tom wanted to go someplace—either the Elks or to one of the bowling alleys—I went with him. Some times we'd take the kids but there wasn't much for them to do at the clubs, so they usually stayed home."

The family fragmented and drifted apart. Tom wanted to go out alone six nights a week. Lucy insisted on going with him. Sometimes he let her—and she was miserable in one of the loud, smoke-filled clubs where Tom enjoyed himself so much. Other times, she was left behind—to borrow a car and trail him anyway. Cooky was blossoming into a beautiful young woman with all the accompanying complications: the young boys who were discouraged from coming around, the sneaking out of the house at nights after her parents

thought she was asleep, the lowered school grades, the tight rein on all her activities. Chuck was not blossoming into anything. He was small for his age, very quiet, and overweight. Worse still, Tom was open with his verbal disgust that "His Son" was a lard-ass. His Son was supposed to be tall and straight, intelligent and handsome, a leader at school, an athlete, a role model for other children. His Son was none of these things and rather than listen to the continuous stream of fat-people-die-young and you-look-like-you're-pregnant and why-don't-you-get-off-your ass-and-exercise, His Son stayed out of the family's living room as much as possible when His Dad was home and spent his evenings alone in his bedroom. His Son was also becoming a problem at school, receiving regular disciplinary action ranging from staying after school to writing "I will not create a disturbance in Mrs. Stevens' class" 500 times to paddling with a solid 1" × 5" board with holes drilled in it. His Son laughed at the mild discipline but tried to avoid the board at all costs. His Son was also allowed to roam the streets on Friday and Saturday nights with no supervision. Even Candy, usually docile and almost forgotten by the rest of the family, put on weight and was given to fits of crying over the least thing.

Meals were usually eaten in silence. Family activities, at best, consisted of one or two nights a week at a bowling alley or club. On Sundays, Tom barbecued steak or chicken or hamburgers for the others while he contented himself with a sandwich and half a case of beer. Once every six weeks or so, they all went out to a nice restaurant for an evening meal but that often ended with squabbles between Candy and Chuck.

"Whatever Chuck ordered, Candy ordered," Lucy recalls. "So, he'd get mad and change his order and she'd get upset and Tom would end up growling at all of us."

There was some physical violence, as well. Chuck was given almost anything he wanted in the way of toys, a set of drums, books, and clothes, but he never seemed satisfied. He always wanted something more and his demands led to open violence against him by Tom. Family members recall four or five instances where Tom used his fists against Chuck and one instance when, in a drunken rage, Tom tried to strangle his son.

Chuck underwent a noticeable change during the 6th and 7th grades. There are no disciplinary actions in the school files from the 1st through 5th grades, but the 6th is loaded: constant interruption of class, possession of semi-pornographic material, possession of dice and cards, possession of a knife, gambling in class, fighting in class, fighting on the school grounds before school, fighting on

the school grounds after school, fighting on the school grounds during recess, organizing large-scale harassment of the teachers, organizing and encouraging his classmates to disrupt class, and generally making a nuisance of himself.

He attended the then-brand new Sul Ross Elementary School during the 6th grade. The school had two classes for each of the six grades with students transferring from one room to the other at midday. He liked, feared, and taunted his morning teacher, a Mr. Williamson, a young part-time police officer nearly twice Chuck's size. He hated, baited, and disgusted his afternoon teacher, the aging Mrs. Stevens.

One of his classmates recalls their classes.

"Chuck was a terror. He caused more problems than all the rest of us put together. He was generally careful around Mr. Williamson, pushing him just so far and trying to pull his neck back just before Mr. Williamson got him. He usually got away with most of the stuff he pulled but once every two or three weeks, he'd go too far and end up with a board across his ass. That always seemed to work for a while, but then he'd start fucking around again. He seemed to enjoy seeing what he could get away with, how many times he could do something before they nailed him. He was about as fearless as anybody I ever came across. Even when Mr. Williamson jerked him out of his chair and clobbered him with the board, he'd only behave for a little while and then he was right back into the breach again.

"Poor Mrs. Stevens," he laughs. "She died not long after he left the 6th grade and the joke going around then was that she died with his name on her lips. She never could learn to handle him and walked out of the classroom a couple of times to get away from him. She wasn't a particularly pleasant woman to begin with and almost no one liked her so we sort of enjoyed it when he taunted her.

"He stole her grade book one time with all our grades in it for an entire semester. She had to go back through all our tests and look up the grades again so she could re-do our individual grade averages for the semester. That must have taken her days to do. He also stole her Teacher's Edition of our English book 2 or 3 times and if she laid down her pen or ruler for any reason at all, he'd swipe them, too. Hell, he didn't even want that stuff. He just took it and dumped it in the creek a mile from school, just to aggravate her.

"He'd also do crazy things that we thought were funny back then, like catching flies and tying colored threads to them and then turning

them loose to fly around the room with all these different threads trailing along behind them, or throwing all her chalk and erasers out the window when she'd turn her back for a minute. I remember one time—the school was a one-story job with really big windows down the whole side of the building—I remember when she was talking and writing on the blackboard with her back to us and he started clearing his throat and waving his hands at us to get our attention. When probably half the class was looking at him, he suddenly jumped up and threw himself out the window, tumbled over onto his feet on the ground outside, ran back to the window, climbed in, and sat back down before our laughter caused Mrs. Stevens to turn around. She looked at us and wanted to know why we laughing and then looked at him and knew why. He just smiled at her. He harassed that poor old woman every day and when he didn't bother her she got worried that he was up to something even worse than usua. You could actually see her age during that one year."

"The other kids? Most of them didn't like him. He was a smart-ass, didn't socialize too much, too much of a prankster for most of the other kids, I guess. He always had to keep things happening, organizing dice games during recess, chalking swastikas on the blackboard, that sort of thing. If he was my kid now, I'd beat the hell out of him, but back then it was funny to us kids.

"Violent? Oh, yeah, sometimes. Usually, the fights he got in were the pushing-shoving type of thing that rarely involved any real violence. No bloody noses that I recall, but a few scratches and bruises now and then. Hell, I fought him myself 5 or 6 times, but we usually quit before there was any damage to either of us.

"I remember one time, though," he pauses. "There was another kid about his weight but a little taller. I can't remember his name now. Anyway, we were in Mr. Williamson's class and while he was writing on the blackboard, Chuck got a little booklet-magazine out of his desk that had semi-pornographic girlie pictures in it that by today's standards would be pretty tame but which were wild to us back in the 6th grade. He half-turned in his chair and starting flashing the pictures at the girl next to him who got embarrassed and turned away. I was sitting behind him and we sort of huddled with the book and forgot all about Mr. Williamson until he was right on top of us. He grabbed the book and Chuck with one hand and me with the other and then ordered the kid beside me—who hadn't been doing much of anything except glancing over my shoulder—to come with us. We all went to the principal's office together and I got 10 licks with the board, the other kid only got 5 by crying and swearing he'd only read the captions and hadn't looked at the

pictures, and they gave Chuck about 20 or 25. I was smarting and near tears from my 10 so I know Chuck had to be hurting. I saw his chin quiver towards the end and his eyes were misty but he didn't cry. After a little speech about good Christians and filthy, evil Devil pictures, we were allowed to go to the boys' room next to our classroom. We wet some paper towels and put them on our faces and tried to compose ourselves before going back to class. Mr. Williamson left us for a minute to check on his class and we 3 boys were talking quietly together when all of a sudden the door burst open and Mr. Williamson grabbed Chuck again and jerked him down the hall. Five or ten minutes later, they came back and Chuck's face was red and his eyes were damp. Chuck didn't say a word but Mr. Williamson was mad as hell. Later on, during lunch break, we found out what happened: while we were in the principal's office, this other kid had taken it upon himself to go through Chuck's desk and he found another nudie booklet which he gave Mr. Williamson while we were in the bathroom. Chuck got another 20 or 25 licks with the board for the second one, too.

"The rest of the day, Chuck just sat in his chair and stared at his desk top or at the wall in the front of the room. I can't describe the vibes I got from him, but I'd never seen anything like it before. He was just so intense. I was really worried about him. He never said a word to anybody and everybody noticed how quiet he was and even a couple of the kids who didn't like him tried to talk to him but he snubbed them. There was such a feeling coming from him—it's hard to describe—a feeling like tension and fear and hatred all rolled into one.

"I lived two blocks this side of Chuck's house and we sometimes walked home together, but as soon as the last bell rang, he just disappeared. I don't mean he left. I mean disappeared. Vanished. One minute he was in front of me and the next he was gone. I looked for him for a few minutes, then started home. A lot of kids had their parents pick them up but all of us lived within a mile of the school—that was before they started this busing bullshit—so about twenty of us headed off in the same direction on foot or bicycle. There was a junior high school a half-mile from us and some of those kids joined us, too, thank God. We were strung out for about a hundred yards and the kid who'd turned in the second booklet was walking about 30 yards in front of me. When we reached a small bridge over a narrow creek, there were still a dozen of us including the snitch and a couple of junior high kids. The weeds at the creek were high and thick and full of cotton mouths and water moccassins but we played there often anyway. Well, just as

the snitch reached this end of the bridge, Chuck dove at him from the weeds. They both went down and Chuck was on top of him, slugging him with his fists. I ran towards them—not to stop the fight, just to get a better view—and so did some of the others. Chuck had this other guy down on the pavement, just pounding the hell out of him, and he had an expression on his face that I didn't see again 'till I went to Nam. He wasn't just mad or angry, he was furious. His jaw was set, his eyes were wide, his nostrils flared. I backed away from him. I was actually scared of him.

"Luckily, a couple of the junior high kids finally grabbed him and pulled him off. Chuck was banging this guy's head against the pavement and the guy was screaming. It was frightening.

"Chuck jerked away from the older boys and headed for home at a fast walk. I let him go alone. The other kid's head was bleeding and I think his nose was bloody, too, and he was crying from pain and fear.

"Repercussions? None. The kid apparently said he fell down because we never heard anything about it at the adult level. The kid skipped school the next day or two but he didn't say anything about it when he came back. He didn't tell on anybody else, either. Chuck broke him of that real quick."

This seems to be the first instance of real violence anyone can recall. The boy he hurt was larger than himself but Chuck had the advantage of quick and unexpected ambush. The attack was launched with such suddenness and from such an unlikely area as the snake—infested weeds that surprise was complete. It wouldn't be the last time he relied on surprise when dealing with someone he perceived as an enemy.

The 6th grade seems to be a turning point in his life. He and another boy "ran away" from home one day but were found the same evening at an outdoor theater a few miles away. An inner violence surfaced at least once during this period, as well, but seems to have been kept in check. As family members continued to clash with one another, he felt more and more apart from them and began spending a considerable amount of time in his own private world. In time, the lines between the real world and the fantasy world he was creating would melt into one.

Several things stand out in the minds of the men who played with him as children. Chuck became heavily interested in building plastic models of tanks, planes, soldiers, and ships, and played with toy soldiers for hours on end. He also became a fanatic for war and science fiction movies. ("He became the hero or villain in the film. I don't mean he imitated them, I mean he actually became



the character.”) Yet another interest appeared: acting out what he had seen on the screen or read in a book and writing his own versions of novels and short stories with himself as the leading character. Some of the stories were near-fact, others were bizarre science fiction novels, some never progressed beyond the initial outline stage, but all had the same common theme: himself as the center of attention.

His periods of play outside the house moved from baseball fields to the local creek. The creek wasn't far from his house and he and a dozen or so friends and schoolmates played there on weekends even though it was swarming with fat snakes and beds of quicksand. Several of the other boys recall helping Chuck build a “spaceship” after they'd spent one Saturday morning watching a science fiction movie set on Mars. Chuck was the Ship Commander, taking charge as usual, and the boys fashioned a 6' tall spaceship out of metal trashcans (“Plastic would have melted in the upper atmosphere,” one of them laughs now) stolen from nearby houses. Nobody volunteered to be the first kid in space and after Chuck laid a black powder charge made from ruptured shotgun shells in the tail section, they definitely didn't want to ride it. “We all hid in our mud forts while Chuck lit the fuse,” recalls one of his closer friends. “He just barely made it back to the fort before the charge went off and disintegrated the spaceship in a cloud of white smoke. We all ran like hell for home.”

Another boyhood friend, now an accountant for a large oil company, recalls helping Chuck carry food, canteens, and knives to a favorite hideout at the creek: an underground bunker several feet thick. The Cuban Missile Crisis was on then and Chuck wanted to be ready when the Russians came. “So did I, for that matter,” the friend grins.

### CHAPTER THREE

It took a lot of persuading to convince Chuck Fuller to grant me an interview. He'd cooperated twice in the past with newspaper reporters who had dissected his return letters and used his words and phrases out of context. He was leery of anyone snooping around his case. Lucy was almost as apprehensive but a little easier to win over. Once I had won her confidence, she helped me swing Chuck's approval. I spoke with him on the phone a number of times and received nearly 50 pages of hand written letters from him over a period of several months but the highlight of my research into his case was being able to visit him on three separate occasions at Menard and Hillsboro. Using my maiden name, I was allowed in as a "friend," rather than as a reporter. Interviews with inmates are permissible as long as the corrections authorities have advance notice so that they may set aside a small room away from the family visits, but we agreed to disguise our interviews so word of this book would not leak out prematurely.

Menard prison—or Correctional Center as they call prisons now—is a small, cramped, badly overcrowded prison on the banks of the Mississippi River. It is well over 100 years old and many of the buildings are crumbling despite constant repair. It is the image of the Late Show prison: occasional stabbings, frequent disturbances, cellblocks made of sandstone blocks and steel, bars at every window, guntowers squatting on the walls, cold and ugly. Few people have even heard of Menard despite the fact that it's 2,600+ inmate population gives it the largest prisoner head count in Illinois. It is the prison where Richard Speck tried to do his time on two separate occasions, but was pressured into a transfer back to Joliet by both guards and other inmates who didn't want to be in the same prison

with him. It is the prison where John Wayne Gacy, the homosexual murderer of 33 young men and boys sits on Death Row.

I was nervous about going inside but Lucy assured me that we were quite safe. We were frisked at the outside Gate House by a very pleasant woman guard who obviously knew Lucy well. I learned later that Lucy knew nearly 30 employees by their first name simply from having visited Chuck for more than 11 years. A number of male guards in green uniforms and several women employees in tight slacks and print blouses spoke to her as we waited in a lounge for our names to be called.

After what seemed like no more than 7 or 8 minutes, the loudspeaker on the wall crackled: "Fuller visit. Fuller visit."

Lucy laughed as we passed through a barred double gate and climbed a flight of stairs, "I usually don't have to wait for long. Almost everybody knows Chuck and they call his work assignment right away so he can come up without any delay. Some of the people wait an hour or more before the inmate they came to see can be located and sent up."

The visiting room was a surprise. I'd expected the long tables with the bullet-proof glass running down the middle with conversations held over telephone receivers. Instead, we entered a very large air-conditioned room with carpeted floor and small tables cluttered with cushioned chairs. Almost 40 other people were already visiting with their loved ones and inmate waiters wearing white shirts were carrying trays of coffee, pop, and hot sandwiches to several clumps of people.

Newspaper accounts build an image in one's mind without the reader ever seeing the people they speak of. The headlines referring to the "convicted mass-murderer," the "convicted killer," the "slayer," bring to mind Late Show images of hulking men with bloody knives, scar-faced hoodlums with sneers on their lips, a psychopathic individual who kills coldly and methodically and then denies killing. I had seen snapshots of Chuck but the false image from the newspapers still hung in my mind.

What I saw standing before me was a smiling, pleasant looking young man who warmly greeted his mother and shook hands with his new friend. His hand in mine was warm and firm but seemed rather small, almost adolescent. He was a little shorter than I, maybe 5'8", with a medium build. His hair was in a short shag style, neatly combed, and he seemed to be freshly shaven.

We sat at a table he chose—next to a wall with Chuck in a chair from which he could watch the rest of the room—and ordered drinks. He asked for a diet drink which drew my attention.

What about it?

"They lied. Every bit of mail I've ever sent out or received is logged in by the Mail Office here. They used to censor every word of it but they've stopped that, now. All incoming mail is still opened and checked for contraband but they no longer read it. Outgoing mail is sealed in regular envelopes by the inmate sending it and all the Mail Office does is date it and write down the name of the addressee in a file they keep for each of us. After the article came out, I asked one of the girls in the Mail Office to Xerox a copy of my entire file so I could prove I haven't written anything to Louise since 1968. Mother can give you the copy if you want to see it. I mailed it to her shortly after I received it and she's going to keep it at home until I go to the Board again. I intend to use it to counter the lies that I've written to any member of the Cox family since 1968."

(I viewed the official Menard Prison mail file a week later. There are no letters, cards, or any other type of correspondence to any member of the Cox family. Prison officials assured me that all correspondence is listed in the file, including the dates they are either received or sent out.)

"In addition, there is an Adult Regulation—a Department of Corrections rule—for all prisoners that none of us may correspond with any victim, family members of a victim, or State witnesses without the prior approval of those people. Also, if I've been writing to Louise—or anybody else who didn't want to correspond—why have they waited until now to complain? Why haven't they been complaining all along?

"As far as the threats go, there's a law against threatening people, isn't there? I'm sure if I violated the law, somebody would eagerly charge me with it in court. Have you heard about my being charged? Have you heard of my being indicted for intimidation? For threatening to kill someone? No. No, and you won't either because it's all a bunch of lies."

What happened when you went to the Board?

"I was working in the commissary which is inside the Administration Building in the same area where they have the parole hearings. The day before I was to go to the Board, the Assistant Warden told me not to come to work. He informed me at that time that 'some people' were going to appear against me and he wanted to avoid a possible confrontation between us. I was a little surprised that anyone would come down but agreed to stay off work until those people were gone. I laid in the morning of my hearing, got a few hours extra sleep, then propped my feet up and watched TV

until lunch. After lunch, I went back to bed for a couple of hours. I was really glad to get a day off. I was working 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, and really appreciated the rest. Around one o'clock in the afternoon, one of the inmate workers from the Admin Building came over and woke me up. He was laughing like crazy and said three people had come in to talk against me and had to have help carrying in a box of letters written by people who didn't want me to get a parole."

"He was laughing? Did you get mad?"

"Oh, hell no, I didn't get mad. Guys in prison and even a lot of the staff members have a weird sense of humor. Tell us a funny joke and we might laugh but fall flat on your face and we will laugh. If a guy is really depressed about something, you don't offer sympathy, you laugh at him, pick on him. It'll make him feel better a lot quicker.

"Anyway, I walked up to the Admin Building and a guard I knew who was coming out of the building pointed at me, held his hand over his mouth, and giggled loudly. I shot him the finger and went on inside. The other inmate workers came up to me—laughing naturally—and said that one of the counselors thought he had a hernia from bringing in the box after it was searched at the Gate House. They all thought it was hilarious and wanted to shake my hand before I went in to see the Board. I told them all to go fuck themselves which just brought another loud outburst of laughter.

"I walked into a little conference room off to the side of the Asst. Warden's office and sat down in the chair that faced the desk where two Board members were already sitting. They were smiling slightly and I sorta' grinned at them."

"You were happy about seeing them?"

"Hell, no. It wasn't a funny ha-ha kind of grin, it was just a little humorous. I knew I wasn't going to make parole and they knew I wasn't going to make parole. Hell, I wait on them every month when they come down for the hearings and I'd already taken a reading on them several months before. While they sip their coffee and wait for their sandwiches to cook, I talk to them if I have time. That's why we were grinning at each other. We'd already had this hearing over the lunch counter and it seemed humorous to pretend we were having a 100% real, all-American, honest-to-God, cross-my-heart-and-hope-to-die fair and open hearing. All three of us knew what the decision would be before we even went in the room. We just went through the motions of this hearing. They asked me where I wanted to go when I made parole, where I was going to work, who I was going to live with, etc. I answered them politely each

time but didn't offer any additional comment. Finally, one of them said, "O.K. We'll let you know our decision in a few days." I was a little surprised that neither of them mentioned the petition or the people who came in before me, but since they'd told me before that all matters of parole were 'ours and ours alone' and that they resented people appearing for or against a parole candidate, I assumed they weren't too terribly impressed by the previous presentation. I thanked them and left.

"I went back to work and it seemed like all the cons and half the staff teased me about it except for 6 or 7 of the women secretaries who expressed a great deal of sympathy for me. The counselor who had helped carry in the box came up and said he thought it was the funniest thing he'd ever heard of. He couldn't wait to tell me about his having flipped through the petition and 'half the town must have signed it.' When I told him there were three times as many signatures on the petition as there were adults in Mattoon, he really lost it. Then he told me about reading two dozen of the 92 letters opposing my parole and I was surprised again. I didn't know there would be letters but he not only told me who wrote many of them, he also told me what was in them. Some of the letter-writers accused me of the usual bullshit you can read in the Mattoon paper: threatening them, writing letters to them, etc. A few were more novel, though, one saying 'When I think of Charlie Fuller, I think of Richard Speck' which really pissed me off because Speck is a rapist and a faggot and I'm neither. I was actually a little concerned about it for a while until one of the Board members came out and assured me that they only read four of the letters and stuck the rest in my file. He also quietly reminded me that I already knew what was going to happen before the hearing ever took place, so 'why worry?' "

"Are parole hearings normally decided outside of the conference room?"

"Not normally, not for everybody. Some guys—like Speck—the Board's already made up its' collective mind long before they even see him. But guys who work around the Board and who establish a rapport with one or more members generally know in advance what's going to happen. I knew I hadn't done enough time yet because they told me so. The petition and the letters were totally unnecessary and a waste of time. The Board paroles people when the Board gets damn good and ready to parole people and not a day before or after.

"I went ahead and worked the rest of my shift, ate supper, and



went back to bed. My routine was the same for the next couple of days until a friend in Mattoon sent me the clippings from the *Journal-Gazette* and the *Charleston paper*. I read them and really got pissed off. I was angry for the first time in a long while. I read them once, laid them down and paced the floor, then sat on my bed and read them again. I couldn't believe all the lies the Board had been told. I felt an anger I hadn't felt in years. If I'd still been a teenager, I'd have gone off, blown up on the first person I ran into that I could justify beating the shit out of in order to relieve my anger. But I was only a week away from my 31st birthday and I've learned to control and channel my anger and frustrations since I was a kid. Barb, one of the women counselors, had taken up jogging a few months before and suggested I try it to reduce tension. I took her advice. I was already running in place in my room for five minutes each day as part of a very poor exercise program so I slammed the clippings down on my desk and started running in place as fast as I could. I passed the five minute mark, then ten, then fifteen, and finally twenty. My side was hurting, I was dripping with sweat, my heart was pounding like crazy, but I could actually feel the tension leaving my body. The anger was still there when I fell on my bed and I only laid down for a few minutes before I got up and ran again. As overweight as I was, I thought I might have a heart attack but I just didn't care. I ran for another fifteen minutes and it seemed like the more I ran, the less angry I became. By the end of my second run, I was soaked with sweat and out of breath but I really felt good inside."

"The tension was gone?"

He nodded, taking a long drink of his soda, "Completely. I'd felt so angry, I was almost in a rage an hour before but it died to nothing. I pulled my clothes off and cupped my big gut in my hands. I was so greasy I had more fat over each hipbone than I have in my whole abdomen now. I looked at that belly and said, 'This sucker's gotta' go.' I'd tried dieting in the past but I'd never had a good incentive. I felt I had one now: I had an enemy and I had to get in shape if I wanted to win against him. The next morning, I skipped breakfast. I haven't eaten it since. My stomach growled for a few days but I drank a couple of extra diet sodas and got used to it pretty quickly. Then I cut out the supper meal. Now that one hurt. That was my main meal of the day and I just quit eating it one day. I haven't eaten it since, either. Bit by bit, over a period of about five weeks, I cut back on my meals, on snacks, even on the amount of diet soda finally. Right now, I eat a candy bar around

mid-morning, eat a regular lunch around noon, plus all the diet soda I want, but I don't eat anything after 1:30 in the afternoon. I've kept up the running, too, like Barb suggested."

"You mean to tell me, the reaction against your parole was actually turned to your benefit?"

He laughed, "Yeah, when you're locked up for as long as I've been locked up, after a while you find yourself in a mind-deadening routine. You get complacent, like a cow. I had a good job, a relaxed cell area to sleep in, no enemies I could name, I got along with—or ignored—everybody, cons and employees alike. I was still a good worker, but I never went to the exercise yard, never went to the gym, rarely exerted myself physically, and I was fat as a hog. I just laid around in bed and listened to the radio, or read, or watched TV. I think I actually liked it here. This petition was great for me: it made me realize that I was locked up."

I was disbelieving, "You didn't know you were locked up?"

"Oh, I knew I couldn't go uptown to the store when I wanted to, but prison is like a little community. Almost anything we need is right here. We're fed, clothed, looked after, there's an M.D. here 24 hours a day in case we get sick. I've also made a lot of friends with both cons and staff members over the years. It's easy to get into a routine, to convince yourself that you're fine even if you have to stay here the rest of your life. You turn into a cow if you're not careful. You lose your initiative, your decision-making process, your brain turns to oatmeal, you end up walking around here like a Space Cadet. If this petition hadn't come about, I'd have been walking around in here this time next year wearing one of those beanies with a propeller on it."

"You generally react to threats with open violence don't you? A boyhood friend of yours told me about your beating another boy in the sixth grade and hurting him very badly. There seems to be a marked change in your reaction to this type of thing."

He suddenly seemed embarrassed. I almost expected him to hang his head. His eyes were downcast for a few seconds but he recovered quickly.

"You've been doing your homework," he grinned. "I've been violent a number of times in the past, that's true. The boy you're talking about butted into something he had no business getting into. I got a painful whipping because of his actions and I got even with him for that. He should have minded his own business. But I was 12 then and 12 year olds are expected to react to situations a little differently than 31 year olds."

"Was that the only time you were violent when you were younger?"

I could see his mind racing for just an instant before he masked it with a smile. He didn't know how much I knew about him but he did know I'd interviewed some of his schoolmates. I expected him to be evasive or even clam up. I was wrong. He was even more open.

"No, it wasn't the only time. The first five years of school, I don't recall anything more than the usual scuffle little boys get into. But in the sixth grade, the scuffling seems to have increased in both numbers and occasions. I remember a few bloody noses on both myself and my adversaries plus the usual busted lips and assorted bruises. You already know about the one boy I ambushed and why I got him. Do you know about the second one?"

I shook my head.

"There was a girl in my class I really liked. Her name was Jennie and she had long, golden hair and wore glasses. She hated my guts because I was so obnoxious, but I used to follow her around like a dog with my tongue hanging out. She kept telling me to get lost but I just kept coming back. There was also another boy in the class about my size but with less weight and I used to fight him every time we ran into each other even though I knew I was gonna' lose. I never could whip that guy in an open fight. One day, I saw him picking on her as school was letting out and I dropped my books and made a dead run for him. But before I could get to him, he pushed her down, jumped on his bike and took off for home. She was crying and I helped her up and got her her glasses and books and tried to calm her down. She was so mad at him, she forgot how much she detested me and accepted my help. Her dad was a retired Army Brigadier General and she said she was going to tell him about the boy but I told her not to bother. I said something like, 'Tell the General I'll take care of it.'

"This happened on a Friday and I couldn't get away from home that night, but the next afternoon I walked to his neighborhood and hid in some trashcans a block up from his house. I waited there for about an hour until I saw him coming back from the creek on his bicycle. I'd brought some rocks and a semi-sharp spear made from a small tree trunk because I knew I couldn't whip him but I intended to do him some kind of damage. When I saw him peddling for home, I knew what I was gonna' do. I waited until he was parallel to where I was laying on the ground, then jumped up and threw the spear into the spokes of his front tire. In about one second, the spear jammed the wheel and he went head-over-heels into the pavement. He managed to break his fall but when he got done rolling down the street, I'd still skinned his head. He looked at me real

crazy but he wasn't crying. I told him why I did it and that he'd better leave Jennie alone if he didn't want his head busted again. As far as I know, he never bothered her again and we never had another fight."

My visit with Chuck lasted a little over three hours. I left with a wealth of material and a new image of the man the newspapers write about. He strikes me as being a very pleasant young man, quite open and honest about nearly everything, but embarrassed to discuss anything he has done that resulted in injury to anyone else. He admitted things to me that have never come out in court: how he fashioned a mortar from a 3" pipe, rigged a powder charge from a shotgun shell, and fired the weapon from his backyard; he told me of the times he and his playmates went to the snake-infested creek, built forts on opposite banks and had make-believe wars, and how the play wars went from arming with sticks pretending to be guns, to throwing dirt clods from behind trashcan shields, to BB gun fights; of the day the junior high school boys chased them from the creek and claimed it for their own—and of how he scratch built a 2' long cannon, filled it with rocks and a toilet paper wad of shotgun shell powder, sneaked down to the creek, and fired it at the bullies. Miraculously, none of the boys were hit and Chuck managed to lose them in the thick undergrowth during his wild run for home. The junior high schoolers decided they didn't want to play at the creek any more but so did some of the elementary school boys who now refused to play with Chuck any longer.

Increasingly, Chuck began to spend a lot of time alone. He turned more and more to his toy soldiers. German and American, American and Japanese, American Civil War, Ancient Rome, American Indians and Cavalry, soldiers of all eras and nations were bought for or by him. Boxes of them were piled under his bed, in his closet, and in his bureau drawers. Most of them came from the Louis Marx Toy Co., but there were many other brands as well. For Christmas, when he was 6 or 7 years old, Tom bought him a large replica of the Alamo with 3" figures of Davy Crockett and a horde of attacking Mexicans. Chuck was ecstatic. He still had a few of the soldiers from this first set when he was arrested. ("I also got a little Davy Crockett suit and coonskin cap along with the soldiers. I strutted around the neighborhood in that suit 'till it fell apart.") Each Christmas, it was always the same when asked what he wanted for a present, "I want some soldiers." Each Christmas, he got them. Soldiers, trucks, tanks, planes, even a few ships, anything with a weapon. Fort Apache with the 7th Cavalry and charging Indians. The Blue and the Gray complete with plastic versions of dead horses and

men. World War II Germans by the hundreds, Americans with armored vehicles. Japanese cast in yellow plastic. Even a few Napoleonic troops, nearly impossible for him to find during the '60's because of the overwhelming demand for American Civil War figures. In between the usual Christmas purchases, there were the 98¢ bags of soldiers bought whenever he had the money. Just from talking with him this first time, it is obvious he derived a great deal of pleasure from his little armies.

Other little boys played with him until, one by one, they pursued other interests. He kept at his soldiers. He was in the Little League in the 6th grade, his team coming in at second place for the city and he even played baseball in vacant lots but wasn't really enthusiastic about it. He didn't notice it at the time, but he was playing by himself more and more and shunning contact with other people his own age.

His body underwent a number of changes between the 6th and 10th grades. His height increased to a point where he was nearly the size of his schoolmates, but he developed a complexion so bad his face appeared to be solid red. The complexion plagued him until he was 16 and made him miserable and even more withdrawn from social activities. His voice cracked, altering between the high voice of a little boy and the deeper voice of a teenager. He walked around with what he describes as "a perpetual hard-on."

The family relationship dropped to near-zero. The parents were absent: Tom and Lucy were either together at the bowling alley or Elks club, or Tom was out alone and Lucy was searching for him. Meals together became rare and when the whole family did eat together, Tom developed severe indigestion. "He told us we made him sick," Chuck recalls.

For a while during 1962-1964, Chuck hung around with a few boys older than himself. They were into model cars and real cars and he put aside his military models and began collecting plastic cars and motorcycles. The relationship between the boys seems to have been good, but the age difference soon sent the other boys off in pursuit of other boys and girls their own age. Chuck was left behind.

"I was awkward," he admits. "I hardly ever spoke to my parents other than to answer a question and I couldn't relate to very many people. I tried to imitate the other guys in talking to girls but the girls were usually older and I was small for my age so they just patted me on the head and laughed. That made me feel even more awkward. And when I got around a girl my own age, I was self-conscious of my bad complexion and the fact that I just couldn't



think of anything to say. I was uneasy just trying to talk to people."

Attempts at dating were disasters. His self-esteem was very low, he had a reputation as a "hood," and his inability to form and hold relationships with other people caused him to withdraw into himself. The withdrawal only lessened contact with outsiders and aggravated an already rapidly-deteriorating state of mind. Worse still, there not only was no support from the family—the family itself became a destructive force. The parents argued and fought, Tom usually heading for the nearest tavern afterward while Lucy took out her anger on Cooky and Chuck.

"I don't remember any whippings until we moved to Bryan," Chuck told me. "I'm sure I was spanked when I was smaller but I don't recall any of them right off hand. But in the 4th grade, after we moved back to Texas from Maine, I remember a lot of whippings with a belt. Candy and I were the favorite targets for a while for any slight thing we did but Candy was so timid at home that it didn't take long for her to cover her tracks well enough that she only rarely got a whipping after the first year or so in Bryan. Cooky started getting them a little past puberty. She was a beautiful girl and popular with the boys and Mom used to beat the hell out of her if she thought she'd been out with some guy."

Cooky's childhood is remembered with bitterness: "I was laughed at a lot in elementary school because my mother insisted I wear my hair in long ringlets like Shirley Temple and wear very short dresses when the style back then was 3" or 4" below the knee. Showing your panties is very 'in' now but then it was humiliating. I even remember hiding evidence of physical maturation because I was sure Mother would punish me for developing breasts. I hated my mother bitterly then and still can't get along with her all that well. She used to beat me black and blue with a belt if I even looked at a boy and when she'd catch me sneaking into or out of the house at night, I really got the crap beat out of me. Topics of conversation around the house—when we spoke—ranged from bowling to movie star gossip to wondering who Dad was sleeping with this week. We were given a lot of material things, probably far more than most kids with parents in the same income bracket as ours', but our parents never gave of their time and that was something that didn't cost a red cent. We never had family discussions, never talked about God, never heard them express how they felt the day each of us was born. They never expressed pride in any of us. The only emotions ever expressed came during the fights. I couldn't wait to get out of that house."

Cooky left the house on her way to Bryan's Stephen F. Austin



High School one chilly morning in November of 1963, but by noon was in Mexico with 6'5" George Heiman. They were married and Cooky quickly became pregnant to prevent the marriage from being annulled. She, at least, had escaped.

Chuck, Candy, and Lucy continued their pattern of spending each summer in Maine. At Tom's insistence, they spent three months there from June through August. If they came back earlier than late August, it provoked violent parental clashes. To try and keep the fragile peace, Lucy and the kids stayed in Maine as long as possible.

Chuck loved it there. He enjoyed walking in the thick woods of Port Clyde for hours on end, never seeming to tire of the trees and rocks, the jagged coast line soaked with the spray of exploding waves, the tangy smell of salt filling the air. He had a few friends here—all of them girls—but preferred to walk alone.

"Port Clyde's a quiet little town, no crime, no tensions, no cops," he says. "You can hear the ocean from my grandmother's house and actually see it from the center of town half a mile away from the house. I didn't go out on the water much because I was afraid of drowning, but I loved the woods. The smell of the pine needles, the humming of insects, the little skittering noise squirrels make, even an occasional deer crashing through the trees. I loved it. It's the most beautiful state I've ever been in."

In the summer of 1963, Lucy ended up in the Rockland, Maine, hospital for removal of her gall bladder. She won't talk much about it, but Chuck discussed it in one of his letters.

"Candy and I were stuck with my grandmother who we judged insane. My grandfather was all right and usually ok'd whatever we wanted to do but he was very sick so Grandma Breen took charge of us. It was the worst summer of my life. She didn't want us out of the yard, refused to let us go to the beach because she said we'd drown, wouldn't let us watch TV because TV was evil, insisted we listen to religious programs on the radio on Sundays, and made us get completely dressed and stand in the middle of the kitchen with all appliances disconnected if a storm was brewing. I hated being around her that summer and used to jump out my second story window at night just to get away for even an hour.

"One day, my grandparents came back from the hospital with two of my aunts and they were all whispering together in the living room so naturally I sneaked close to the door so I could hear what they were talking about. What I heard really scared me. The nurse assigned to my mother's floor was making her rounds and saw Mom out of bed standing near a window. The nurse went in and asked

why she was out of bed and Mom said something about wondering what the reaction would be if she jumped out the window. Mom said later that she was only joking but the hospital didn't find it amusing and kept a suicide watch on her."

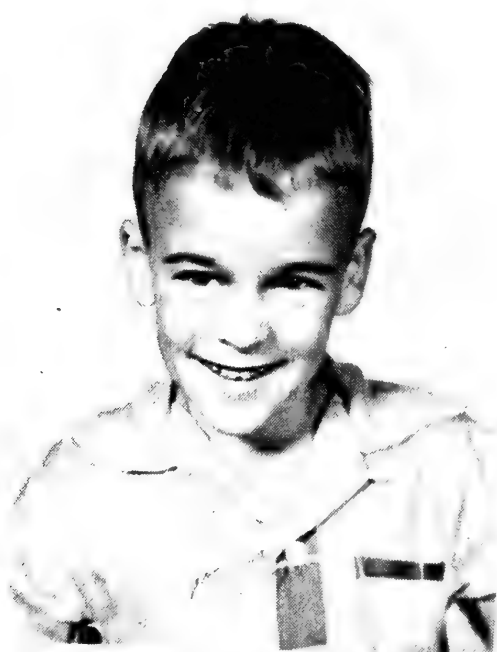
Lucy was far from home, her family life a disaster, and Tom had just refused to come to Maine to visit her in the hospital because "it cost too much." The pressures building within her were nearly as great as those inside Chuck. If the nurse had not made her rounds when she did, Chuck feels Lucy would have jumped from the third floor of the hospital to the parking lot pavement below.



Chuck Fuller. December 27, 1950. One year old.



(Top) Fuller family portrait, November 26, 1954. (Bottom) School pictures, first and third grades.



SCHOOL DAYS 1956-57  
ASHBEL SMITH



SCHOOL DAYS 1958-59  
ASHBEL SMITH



1958. Two views of Chuck's bedroom. Note the airplanes, cannons, holstered six-guns, and toy soldiers.

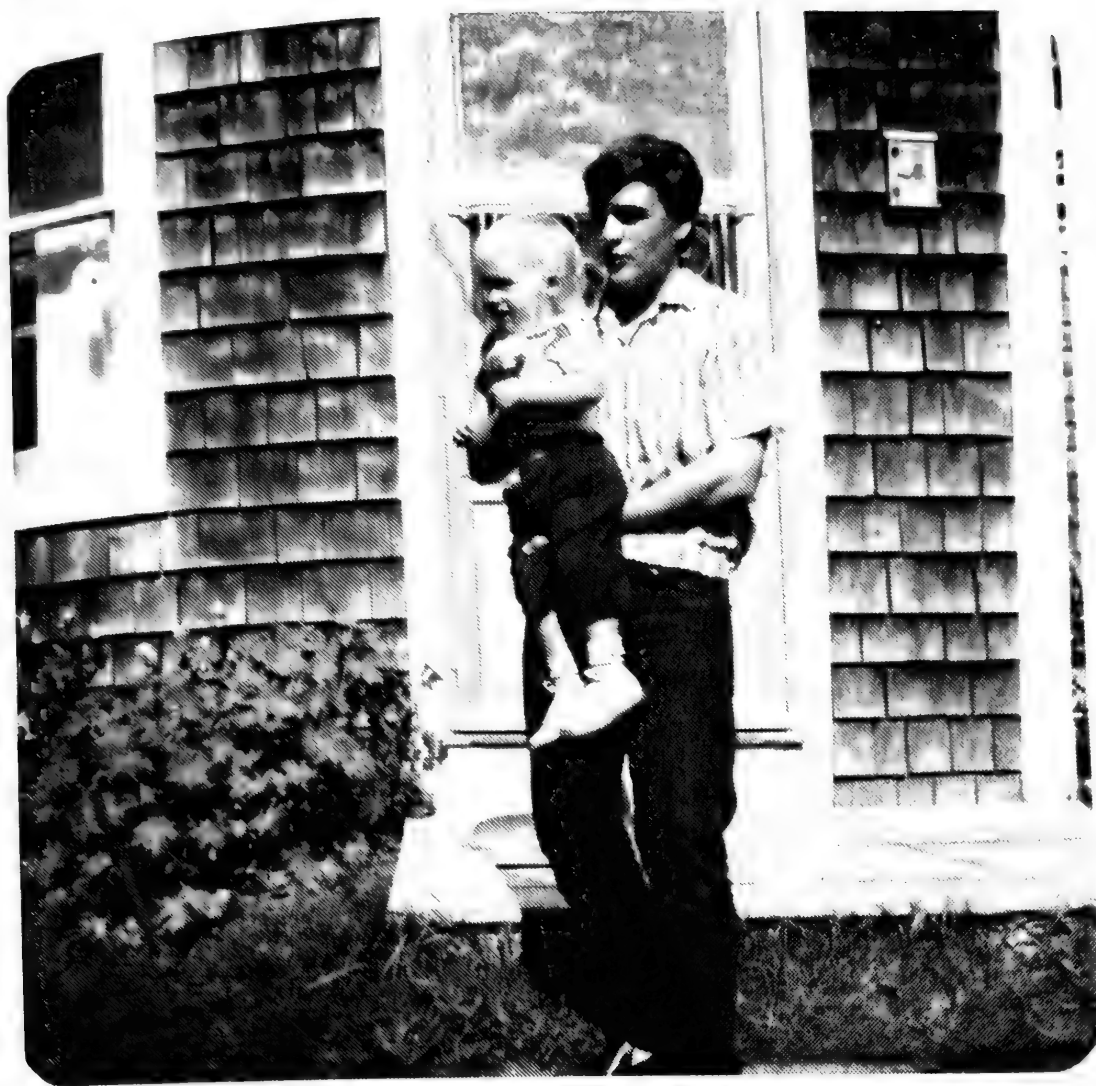






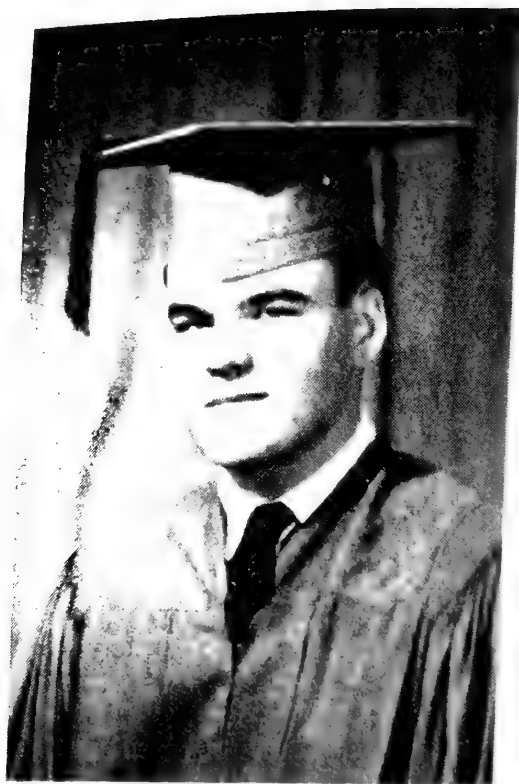
(Top) Christmas 1962. Increasingly rare group family picture, l. to r.: Lucy, Cooky, Chuck, Candy. (Bottom) Chuck and friend in Chuck's bedroom. Once again, note the column of toy soldiers on the floor advancing toward the far corner. Other plastic models of cars and armored vehicles are on the shelf behind the two boys.





(Top) June, 1966. Port Clyde, Maine. Chuck with Sean. (Bottom) October, 1966. Dallas, Texas. ROTC uniform. His expression is one of near-arrogance, typical of him when wearing a uniform.





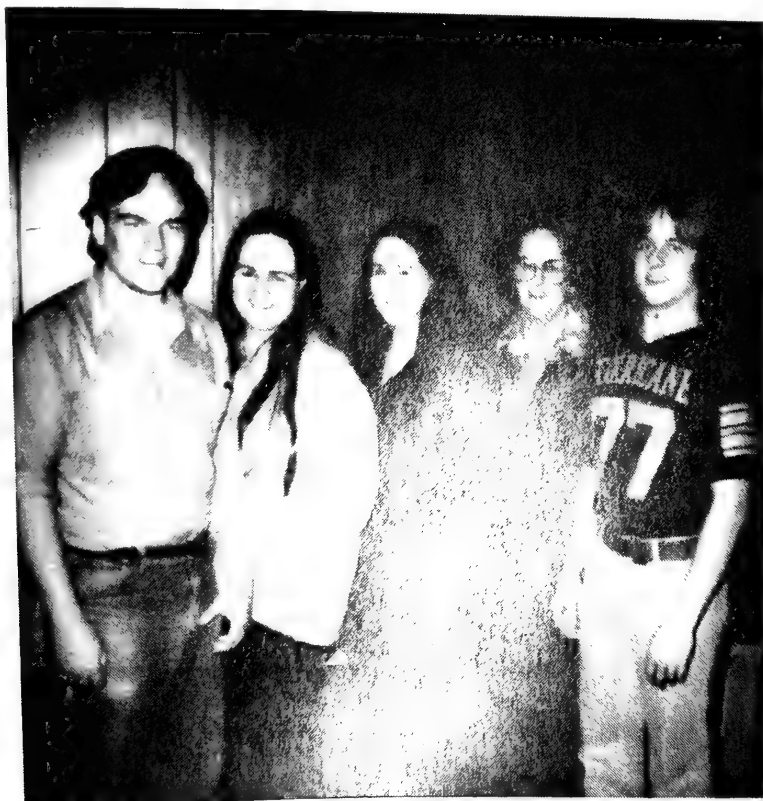
1968. Wearing the gown and cap he would never wear to graduation.

(Below) April 20, 1968. At the Cox farm, six-gun strapped to his belt ala' Lee Van Cleef. The Army jacket and khaki shirt are the same ones he wore on the 27th of April.





(Top) 1972. Menard Correctional Center visiting room. Chuck with his older sister, Cooky, and her newborn twins. (Bottom) Poor quality photograph taken at Menard's new visiting room. With Chuck are his sisters, mother, and brother.







(Top) Chuck and Candy at a picnic outside the walls of Menard. The annual picnic is held for men serving 20 years or more and is an all-day event with visitors allowed to bring in homemade foods. (Bottom) Chuck with two of his seven nieces receiving watermelon-flavored kisses.





## CHAPTER FOUR

In late 1963, Lucy became pregnant again. Tom was openly contemptuous of her, drinking more heavily now and glaring at her in front of Candy and Chuck. The looks weren't lost on the kids who rallied to their mother's side. Even Chuck was very attentive even though he seldom spoke to either parent anymore.

Carl Sean Fuller, 6 lbs. 10 oz., blue eyes, hair as pale as paper, was born on August 1, 1964. Chuck loved him.

Lucy remembers, "Sean was in a crib in my and Tom's room and Chuck's bedroom was next to ours. If Sean let out a small noise in the middle of the night, Chuck was often out of bed and tending to him before I could react. Any noise or cry and I had to race Chuck to get to Sean first. He took good care of that baby, changed his diapers, walked him, fed him, played with him. Tom played with him sometimes, but not all that much. It seems like Chuck was always with him and I don't remember him ever refusing to take care of his little brother."

Chuck's reputation in the neighborhood changed with the arrival of Sean. He calmed down, stopped fighting, and started taking jobs baby-sitting for neighborhood children. In a short while, the adults who knew him viewed him as very mature for his age, quiet, and more dependable as a baby sitter than local girls who spent much of their evenings on the phone. He was a no-nonsense sitter who enforced discipline without resorting to spanking and who made sure the kids were in bed at the proper time. But he was also popular with the children under his care. He made them laugh with some of his antics, read to them, cuddled them, cared for them. They began to look up to him. He loved it.

"When we'd go to the bowling alley or one of the clubs," Lucy says, "the kids he kept would come up to him right away. Sometimes

they'd bring their little friends with them and Chuck would often end up with a group of ten or fifteen following him around. I remember once at an outdoor Elks picnic when he had a group of about 40 or 50. Everybody thought it was funny and it tickled the adults to be able to get rid of their kids for a while. The ages? He was about 14 or 15 and they were usually at least a couple of years younger."

He organized the kids into squads, drilling them, marching them around, telling them stories of the one subject he loved: war. He read voraciously and the little ones thought he must know everything. He told them he did.

For a year or so, the parents found it humorous. But when arguments between parent and child ended with: "I'm gonna' tell Chuck," the number of recruits in Chuck's army began to drop. He tried to regroup and soften his image, but many of the adults were leery of his hold over their children and they switched sitters.

Chuck was furious. His army dwindled to a dozen youngsters between the ages of 3 and 10. They were devoted to him but his ranks were so thin compared to the "old days" that he quit sitting for all but one family directly across the street from his own home.

With his evenings no longer spent caring for his army of children, Chuck pursued other interests. He built pipe bombs and used them to slaughter snakes in their holes at the creek. He sharpened wooden spears made from the trunks of dead saplings and fought snakes one on one, usually ending with the death and beheading of the snake though some managed to escape him. He stuck the several heads on sticks set in the ground and lined the creek banks with them. He engaged in shoplifting, most of it the petty theft of paperback books or candy bars, but he once stole a World War II toy soldier set packaged in a heavy cardboard box 4' and 2' wide. ("I just stuck it under my arm and walked out. Nobody paid any attention to me. I was too open about it.") His fascination with military things grew and he took over a small utility room in the garage where he spent many, many hours with glue and paint and knife, fashioning new and more elaborate scenery for his soldiers to fight over. He learned the art of converting models and soldiers, using a hot knife to cut away pieces from one figure to make it resemble another. He also began dabbling red paint on "dead" soldiers to make them look "more realistic."

His grades at Lamar Junior High were poor. He failed several classes including Math—formerly one of his better subjects. Only one fight is on record (Chuck lost) and his discipline problems seem to have decreased or at least been kept under cover. One major

breach of discipline came in the 8th grade in the school gymnasium during a semi-religious singing program by a man and wife team. In the midst of the program, Chuck hurled a penny at the performers which clanged off the floor and skidded away. The program was disrupted and the singers made an angry comment that "We weren't treated like this at other schools." An alert teacher spotted Chuck in the audience—somebody was always watching him—but he managed to talk his way out of severe punishment and the school principal let him off by having him read the morning prayer over the public address system for a week. He received a few paddlings with a board in shop class but generally got along in his other classes. He was devoted to his 9th grade English teach, Sally MacGregor, a tiny, lovely young woman who gained his confidence.

"She was the only teacher I ever let read my stories," he told me in a letter. "I had an old cardtable in my room with a small lamp on the wall above it and I'd stay up on Friday and Saturday nights writing stories. I didn't feel confident enough to send them to a publisher but I enjoyed writing just for the hell of it. I really liked Sally Mac and used to turn in my stories to her either for a grade or just for her comments. She encouraged me to keep writing. I did. I've done 9 short and long novels and 26 short stories that I haven't torn up after writing them. I don't know how many I tore up because I didn't like them. Get them published? Probably never. I just write as a hobby. It pleases me."

Another boy, new to the school system from California, transferred in late in the year. He was a "smarth ass," to quote Chuck who should be able to recognize one, who "caused problems in all his classes." Chuck didn't mind the competition for the annual Smart Ass of the Year Trophy, but he did object to the boy attempting to disrupt Sally Mac's class. Chuck spoke to him twice about it, but the boy refused to come around to his point of view.

Chuck started to plan. He learned the boy's address, rode by his enemy's house a few times on his bike, watched the family's movements, learned when and where the boy liked to go to play. A plan slowly took form in Chuck's mind. Another ambush. A sudden rush from tall weeds near the boy's house. A swift attack. Another bruised body. Another defeated enemy at his feet.

But the boy moved out of town as suddenly as he had moved in. No explanation, no warning. His father's job had called him to Bryan. Now it called him away. The enemy was gone.

Chuck was happy. "He left. He quit bothering Sally Mac and that's all I cared about."

In the 10th grade at Stephen F. Austin High School, Chuck contin-

ued his usual pattern. He was in minor trouble twice: mouthing off to a teacher early in the year and engaging in petty vandalism in the school cafeteria in November of 1965. His grades were B's in English and Physical Education, D's in Social Science, Speech, and Biology. He flunked Geometry. The school principal commented: "Some discipline problems; never seemed to have a good attitude toward school; had to be told to get his hair cut."

The principal had reason to feel Chuck had a poor attitude toward the school administration. Chuck attacked his house twice in six weeks.

"There were 5 of us in a team," Chuck writes. "We used to ride around together Friday and Saturday nights. There were about a dozen teams like us in town, all boys I think, and we made raids against other peoples' houses. If we either liked or disliked somebody, we'd wrap their house. Wrapping a house meant that we'd swarm into somebody's yard late at night and, as quickly as possible, toss rolls of toilet paper into the trees and bushes again and again until the foliage and yard were covered with white. When we got done, it looked like a toilet had blown up in their yard.

"Our team was the best in town. We could completely wrap a house in half the time it took others to do the same job. We were really in demand. Kids would come up to us at school, give us an address and a buck for gas, tell us to drop by their house for a supply of toilet paper, and send us out to hit a victim of their choice. Even people who didn't particularly like me would hire us because they knew we were the best.

"If you were popular, your house might get wrapped every couple of weeks when the weather was nice. If you were unpopular, you either got wrapped just before it rained or the wrappers would dump all sorts of trash in your yard instead of toilet paper.

"We were out farting around one night—dumping trashcans in the streets if I remember correctly—when we passed a house that one of the guys identified as belonging to our school principal. I couldn't pass it up and insisted we hit it. It took a lot of persuading but the other guys finally agreed. We got toilet paper from a half-dozen gas stations, plus paper towels, hundreds of bottle caps from a vending machine, and two trashcans full of assorted garbage. It took us twenty-five minutes but we left a masterpiece. The trees were pure white, the bushes covered with colored paper towels, and the grass was littered with garbage.

"It was the talk of the school. Everybody knew who did it, but we clammed up and none of the adults could prove it. It was the

high-point of my wrapping career and we did it again six weeks later."

The Fuller's moved from Bryan in February of 1966. Tom was transferred to Fort Worth and the kids were enrolled in the tiny suburb school of Everman. At Everman, Chuck met a girl named Vicki.

"She was tiny and had dark eyes and black hair," he recalls. "She wore glasses but was still quite pretty. She lived across the street from me and I started driving her to school in my 1959 Ford. I don't remember taking her out on a regular date, but we used to walk around the neighborhood holding hands and we made out a few times in her living room. She was a nice girl and I really liked her.

"Mother hated her and told me not to bring her to the house anymore. We argued about it, but she was emphatic. She referred to Vicki as a 'bitch in heat' and pointed out that a number of other boys also hung around her house, but I didn't care much about the other boys because they were all younger and didn't have the advantage of owning a car. If Vicki wanted to go anywhere, she had to ask me, not them. I had an edge."

Then the edge disappeared.

"Another guy from one of the city schools started coming around in his car and Vicki seemed to enjoy playing us against one another. I got really pissed and tried to turn her away from him, but she enjoyed being the center of the attention. She floated between us for a while, smiling and liking all the fuss. I got tired of it pretty quickly and told her to make up her mind which of the two of us she wanted to go with. She said she just couldn't decide and when I saw the guy over at her house again, I decided she wasn't worth the emotional stress I felt by being around her so I quit going over to her house. Her dad started driving her to school after that."

Why didn't you try harder to win her for yourself?

"She wasn't worth it. When I was alone, I felt better, like I didn't have any problems. But when I got around her and the other guy, I felt a great deal of stress. By not going over there any more, the stress disappeared instantly. I felt a lot better."

It's just as well that Chuck and Vicki broke off as quickly as they did. The Fuller's soon moved out of town again, this time to the Dallas suburb of Casa View. Chuck hated it. There were "too many people" here. Chuck enjoyed being the center of attention, any kind of attention, and it's hard to be noticed in a city of over a million people. His high school, Bryan Adams, reflected the city population:



huge, classes filled to overflowing, classrooms scattered from building to building, impersonal. Chuck once again repeated his standard pattern, but on a lesser scale. He aggravated 1 or 2 teachers but the rooms were so full of students that it was impossible for him to stand out. He was frustrated in his attempts at organization in all classes except one: ROTC.

"The counselor couldn't believe it when I asked for ROTC," Chuck told me in a letter. "She told me the ROTC's were generally apart from the rest of the kids and some of the kids picked on them. That sounded right up my alley. I signed up for it the same day."

Chuck had problems with the Lt. Colonel instructor and a big cadet Lieutenant, but loved the class. He excelled in the training, became guidon bearer for A Company, and memorized weapon and training manuals. He may also have stolen several manuals on guerilla warfare, weapons and explosives which were discovered missing following a training session.

He found a new camaraderie in ROTC that was missing from most of his other schools. The ROTC's stuck together, went places together, partied together. He experimented with beer and a little whiskey but didn't like it. He would drink enough to stain his breath, splash a little on his shirt and face, and fake it. He was accepted by the other cadets and was soon leading a team of them in raids against liked and disliked students and teachers. His social life improved, he was invited to a considerable number of ROTC functions and private parties, but no one remembers the name of any girls he may have dated. "I don't think he had a girlfriend," was the standard answer to my question although several of his former classmates recall seeing him talking quietly to a number of different girls. "He had friends who were girls," they told me. "But no girlfriends." At the annual ROTC Ball held late in the year, Chuck was in charge of the security detachment outside the building and one of the men who was in ROTC with him remembers Chuck leading a few other cadets in an attack against would-be gate crashers. Chuck loved it.

He had a brief relationship with one 15 year old girl. Chris, the daughter of a Mexican father and white mother, was an inch taller than Chuck, with fair skin and very dark eyes and hair. She was pretty to judge from the picture I saw of her in his belongings his mother carefully stores for him in her home.

"She was Candy's friend for a while," he told me on my second visit while Lucy was conveniently absent from the visiting table for twenty minutes. "But they had an argument and she started coming over to see me instead. If my parents weren't home, we'd make out, but Mom didn't like her because she was only half-white. She

had very small breasts which she showed me after we'd been friends for a while, but I never made love to her. Her older sister had been raped and apparently had a bad time of it and Chris was afraid I might hurt her, so she'd do anything except intercourse."

"Anything? What's that include?"

He laughed, "We'd make out the way I assume most teenagers make out. We'd go to some deserted place in my car and park for 3 or 4 hours. For the first month or so, we'd just kiss each other and cuddle, but she was so open about her body that after a while I could undress her and she'd just look at me like she couldn't understand why I'd want to do that. She was so unconcerned about nudity, it amazed me. Shit, in my house, you'd better have your clothes on at all times. I caught hell a few times for not wearing a shirt and here was this delightful young girl totally unimpressed by naked flesh. It blew my mind. We'd lay down on the back seat and I'd caress her, glide my hands up and down her from knee to throat while I kissed her mouth and neck and breasts. I'd suck on her nipples, too, but her breasts were so small that it didn't turn me or her on very much. She really liked me to put my hand between her legs and finger her, though. She said I had nice hands."

"Did she do anything to you?"

"Sometimes. She was interested in what I looked like sexually so I showed her. Her reaction was another mind blower. She took me in her hand and played with me like she'd just found something washed up on the beach and wondered what the hell it was. I told her what felt good and she was a little awkward but she did all right. We laid on the seat and masturbated each other. I really dug it. It just kinda' interested her."

"Did you have an orgasm?"

"Splash City. She got mildly annoyed because I got it all over her stomach one time and she told me to clean it up but I was so zonked out from the orgasm that it took me a couple of minutes to find my handkerchief and clean us up. That was about the best I could expect from her because she was so afraid of getting pregnant that the highlight of any evening with her would be a little attention from her hand."

"How long did you go together and why did you break up?"

"It was after Christmas of '66 when I first started driving her places and we moved from Dallas in early June of '67. I broke up with her a few weeks before we left town, so I went with her for about five months, I guess. We didn't have much of a relationship to begin with, we just played around with each other because it felt good and it was harmless. We weren't serious about each other

at all. As a matter of fact, I remember going out with my raider team wrapping houses 2 or 3 times instead of going with her for our weekly rubdown because it didn't mean all that much to me. Hell, I could jack-off without her and didn't have to buy my hand a burger, fries, and a Coke afterwards.

"She started smoking cigarettes a week or so before we broke off and I never have been able to stand the smell of cigarettes so I asked her to stop. She refused and I quit taking her out."

"You don't have many friends who recall you dating very much. Only a few recall your dates and almost no one can name any girls you took out. How about that? Did you date much?"

"Not much. My family didn't talk to each other very often at home and when you grow up in an environment where you don't talk much and body contact is limited, it's hard to form any type of relationship with your own family, let alone outsiders. Hell, I remember getting goose bumps all over me in the 9th grade when a girl I knew gave me a hug for doing her a favor. I had little girl friends in the 4th and 5th grades, but they were my age or younger and there's no such thing as dating at that age. In the 6th grade, I was in love with Jennie, but that went nowhere. In Junior High, I was old enough to date and the school offered annual parties but I used to go by myself and hang around with all the other guys who couldn't get or didn't want a date. I took Chris to Jack-in-the-Box after we washed our hands so I guess that could qualify as dating. I also took out one other girl in Mattoon besides Louise."

"Did your parents approve of the girls?"

"Dad didn't care. I could have brought a Martian home and he wouldn't have blinked. Mom used to approve of them when I was little. There was a little red-haired girl in the 5th grade that she liked but I don't know what happened to her. Mom usually found something wrong with them. There was a girl in Baytown named Luann whom I used to see when we visited Dad's old friends there, but Luann was an epileptic and therefore Not Good Enough for me. Another one was Ruth in the 5th grade but Mom found out she was a Jew and that ended that. I never told her about Jennie. During Junior High, I was in love with 2 more girls my age but I never got anywhere with them so my parents never knew about them. Then came Vicki whom Mother despised, followed by Chris, and the two girls in Mattoon, Kay and Louise."

"What about the Mattoon girls? Did she approve of them?"

"She didn't know Kay. I only dated her once before I met Louise. She didn't like Louise, either. Louise's family was on unemployment when I first met them and Mom said they were 'trash'—her usual

word for people she didn't judge to be up to her standards. Louise is short, with dark eyes and black hair, a dark complexion, her voice is not very feminine, it's a little harsh, and Mother just took a dislike to her."

"Who did she approve of?"

He laughed, "Oh, God, there was one I can think of right away. Her name was Judy and she was kinda' cute in a homely sort of way. She wore glasses and was on the Honor Roll, in the school band, never dated, etc. My mom and her mom kept trying to push us together. I was a bad boy and she was a good girl. In fact, she was so good I hated to even get around her. She gave me the creeps, she was so good. She thought I was a hood and was scared of me, so we both tried to avoid each other."

He laughed again, "Mom wrote me 5 or 6 years ago and sounded really sad and depressed. She said good girl Judy had o.d.'d on heroin. I went into hysterics. I thought it was so funny, I fell off my bed laughing."

"Who was your favorite girl friend out of all of them?"

"Oh, I didn't tell you about her. I only went with her for a few days. Late one night, she bit through her leash and jumped the backyard fence and ran away . . ."

We both laughed.

"Your mother seems to want a perfect mate for you. You said she objected to Chris as half-Mexican, another girl as Jewish, one as epileptic. Is she a racist?"

"No. I remember some of my parents' friends in Texas when I was very young and they were open racists. One or two had been in the German Army during World War II but the majority were Americans with strong sympathies for the German cause. They kept telling me how we had fought the wrong enemy in Roosevelt's War but I was so little I didn't know what they were talking about. They were very much into racial studies and probably still are. Hell, the school I went to—Ashbel Smith—I used to give the stiff-arm salute to the American flag during the Pledge of Allegiance in both the 1st and 2nd grades but they stopped it in the third grade after protests from Jewish groups in the area. I don't think Mom is a racist, but she was raised in a strong fundamentalist-type religious household and I recall her saying something like: 'What God has created separately, let no mere mortal join together.' Their religious beliefs were such that God had created the races separately and He intended for them to be kept that way. 'If God wanted the races to mix, He'd have only created one.' Mom isn't a racist, she's religious. It's the way she was raised and she raised us the same way.

"She wanted me to avoid the epileptic Luann and warned me about genetic diseases in a few other girls I knew so I guess at least some of the genetic talk from her friends rubbed off on her."

Tongue-in-cheek, I asked, "Do you think you are genetically inferior?"

He laughed again, a gentle, delighted laugh, "Ain't we all? My family tree includes some damned good people, hard working people for the most part, plus a couple of fuck-ups like me. My dad's grandmother was an American Indian and we've got Irish, English, Scotch, and Hanoverian blood as well. My IQ ranges between 120 and 130, but I was a failure in school from the 4th grade up. Something doesn't add up, does it?"

He grew more serious, "I will say this, though. If they should determine that I do have something wrong with me that is passed on genetically from one generation to the next, I will never father children. But, on the other hand, if I don't have anything wrong with me genetically, I intend to have as many children as possible. I love kids."

Lucy was hostile not only to Chuck's girl friends, but to women in the neighborhood as well.

"We didn't have any neighborhood problems in Bryan, as far as I know," Chuck told me. "Dad had his hands full at work, he didn't need to plow any furrows on the home front. But we had a neighbor in Fort Worth with a 19 year old daughter, and Mom was kept hopping keeping an eye on her. In Dallas, a real nice looking, big-titted blond about 22 or 23 lived next door and came over the first week we were there. She was just trying to be friendly and welcome us to the neighborhood, but Mom was rude to her and gave her some open hints to leave and not come back. I used to speak to her all the time and even went over to her house a few times. She was really a nice woman but Mom didn't like her. She didn't like any woman she viewed as a potential rival."

Parental arguments continued to worsen during 1966 and early 1967. At least one violent fight took place between a drunken Tom and a semi-hysterical Lucy who, screaming shrilly, fought furiously as she retreated to the locked security of the bathroom in their home. All three kids witnessed the fight but none intervened. As Tom stormed out of the house for a nearby tavern, Chuck made a remark to him to "leave her alone." Tom leaped on him, growling, and started to strangle him as they fell against the door frame. After a few seconds of deadly embrace, Tom came to his senses and freed Chuck's throat.

"I ought to kill you both," Tom growled as he slammed the door and went out into the night.



The Fuller marriage was finally at an end. A separation was agreed upon as soon as school was out for the year.

There was one other change at the house. Chuck started sleeping with a razor-sharp hatchet under his pillow.

"If he intended to kill me," Chuck told me grimly. "He'd have to shoot me as I slept. If he had tried to strangle me again, I'd have split his skull."

In early June of 1967, Lucy and the three kids traveled to Maine by car. Unlike past summers, they would not be returning to Texas at vacation's end.

Chuck spoke very little while he was in Maine. He replied when he was asked a question and occasionally made a comment about something, but no one remembers holding a conversation with him. When Lucy wanted to look at the schools in Thomaston, he went with her but didn't seem impressed by the small buildings. He didn't know many kids here but he liked the ones he knew and silently hoped he would spend his senior year here. He wouldn't.

Lucy made up her mind to move to Illinois. She no longer remembers the exact reasons why, but recalls that her own blood relatives were mostly poor lobster fishermen and factory workers who could offer little support to four more people with no income of their own. Jobs in Maine were scarce as well and prospects for Lucy landing a job that paid well enough to feed and clothe her family were very dim. She refused to return to Texas even though she had a number of friends there who would have helped her. Nearly all of Tom's relatives were in Illinois and she had good relations with most of them. She hoped they would be able to give her a hand until she got the family on its' collective feet. She settled on the one town she was familiar with.

Mattoon, Illinois. Birthplace of Chuck and Candy. Location of Mattoon High School. Residence of another family named Cox.

Chuck won't discuss his past relationship with any member of the Cox family with the exception of Louise's twin brother, Louis. He will only discuss general things about the family members and absolutely refuses to discuss his emotional relationship with Louise Cox. But from interviews with former schoolmates and an opportunity to read through much of the testimony of his court hearings, I learned a great deal about them all.

Chuck met Louise in his Business Arithmetic class taught by Mrs. Phyllis Milam. Louise was quiet and even a little withdrawn and he was naturally attracted to somebody as quiet as himself. They sat next to each other in the front row and, as the weeks passed from September into October, they became friends. On October 21, 1967, they went out for the first time. They saw *Bonnie and Clyde*

(Chuck loved it), stopped at a burger joint afterward, made out for a few minutes in the parking lot, and made a promise to see each other again. For the next six months, they dated steadily. They usually attended a local movie then dined on grease burgers and watered-down sodas, but there were also a half-dozen parties and the annual ROTC ball to break the monotony. Chuck was reasonably popular, Louise less so. The Cox family was one of the poorest in the county, Mr. Cox working construction in the summer and living on unemployment checks and food stamps in the winter and the usual small-town snobbery at school kept Louise from many of the better parties.

Chuck seems to have adjusted well at the high school, having only one minor fight with another boy and no other problems in any of his classes. His teachers remember him as "very intelligent, but lacking in motivation," "very quiet," "not a trouble maker," and "polite and intelligent." But there seems to be two different Chuck Fullers in Mattoon. It's impossible to read his journal and believe that the writer and the boy are one and the same. The journal rambles, makes little sense in many places, and seems to contradict the views of people who actually knew him in 1968. The journal contradicts much that is known as fact. I have the verbal and written accounts by nearly 75 people—including Chuck himself—of his violence, his eagerness to place himself in danger by killing poisonous snakes in one-on-one duels, his love for all things military, the red paint smeared on model soldiers, his para-military organization of neighborhood children, his devotion to bloodshed, and his hero worship of the mythical barbarian Conan. But the journal has him saying things like: "I feel it is wrong to take the life of another human being or animal. God placed men of all races here on earth. Had He not wished for them to be here, He would not have created them. The so-called enemies of our nation are men just like ourselves and they have no wish to die. There are many others in foreign countries who are like me and to take their lives would be to take my own. . . . God put them here and He should be the only one to take them away. To attack or kill another man would be to attack the wisdom of God and His decision to place a so-called enemy on earth."

If it wasn't in his own handwriting, I'd swear someone else wrote it. Chuck does not believe in God. He believes in The Gods, but not God. And to spare an enemy? To refuse to kill an animal? To be unwilling to attack someone perceived as an enemy? Chuck?

Other sections make as little sense. I found only one slight reference to Sean Fuller—despite the fact that Chuck was totally devoted

to him. One section screams against "the sex and violence of movies" and demands that the Cinema "be cleaned up along with printed matter." This was supposedly written by a boy who loved war movies and read violent paperback novels and cheap girlie magazines. Other sections of the journal don't seem to fit together, ink coloration differs from one page to the next in mid-paragraph, and the page numbers were all done by the same pen even though that pen does not match the one used to write the page itself.

"Don't believe everything you read," he grinned when I questioned him during our second visit at Menard. "The pages don't fit properly because it was a rush job. I kept that journal from mid-November of 1967 until my arrest. My mother was allowed to bring me my hand-written novels while I was in the county jail so I'd have something to do to pass the time, and the journal was among the 1,800 pages or so that she brought in. All of the papers were hand-written and my attorney just glanced at them before he gave them to me. So, pen in hand, I took the journal apart, rewrote it, wrote whatever I thought my defense attorneys would love to read, and sent it out with my mother on visiting day."

He's laughing as we sit together in the Menard visiting room. He's drinking another Diet Dr. Pepper.

"After I was arrested, I got it in my cell and worked on it before anybody else ever read it or even leafed through it. It's a fake as it's written now. My novels are the same way. Look at them if you can and you'll suddenly find pages written with different ink. I rewrote all three of the ones admitted into evidence at the Aggravation and Mitigation hearing. While I was sitting in my cell following my arrest, I realized what had happened at the Cox house, thought it out very carefully, weighed everything I knew about it, and decided the only defense I had was one of insanity. There's no doubt I'm a little nutty, but juries don't understand psychiatric testimony. They're too stupid. If you want to convince 12 morons you're too crazy to understand what's going on, you have to make your insanity so blatant that even the dumbest of them believe it. The only reason people are on juries is because they're too stupid to know how to get out of serving. Have you ever heard of a doctor being on a jury? A businessman? A banker? Of course not. The only people who end up on juries are housewives, working class people with high school diplomas at best, dropouts from school and society, the unemployed, and various other people with little education. There are seldom any college-educated people on a jury and they're the only ones capable of understanding psychiatric testimony."

"The journal was used by both the State and Defense psychiatrists

in determining your state of mind during your last year of freedom," I reminded him. "It was probably one of the most important pieces of evidence introduced by your attorneys and it almost certainly helped persuade Judge Hannah to send you to prison rather than execute you. Now you tell me that the journal was a hoax. You're telling me that it does not reveal the true thinking of your mind during the time you wrote it. But isn't it a fact that you mention killing Louis Cox in the journal? In one or two places, don't you entertain the idea of killing the entire Cox family? Is your journal factual or semi-factual or what?"

"The day to day occurrences, most of the dates, most of the places mentioned are true. Some of the names mentioned are completely false but the overwhelming majority are accurate. It's also true that I thought about killing Louis Cox several times—the thoughts made all the easier once I owned a handgun. I also felt like destroying the entire family on one or two occasions. But the book itself, the way it is written right now, the way I wrote it in 1967 and early 1968 was never meant to be interpreted as a diary. It started out as a novel. Another one of my Great American Novels that I write and never try to publish. It was originally intended as a background for a fictional story dealing with a boy my age in a similar situation as myself. I'd never had much to do with people my own age, never seemed to be able to form or hold relationships with other people unless they were at least several years younger than myself. When I met Louise and started dating her, I could actually feel our relationship blossoming from the first awkward touch of our hands on the first date when both of us kept trying to think of something to say to our last days together when we talked about marriage and love and children. This was something new for me. I'd never been really close to anybody before and I wrote down a lot of the things I felt. All of my previous novels and stories lacked one thing: believable characters. My story characters were never fully developed. They lacked emotions, they never quite managed to relate to one another. It was a problem I hoped to solve once I developed into a character myself. The people in my real world were developing a day at a time and I hoped to be able to grow along with them. The character in the journal-novel was supposed to develop with me, was supposed to learn along with me. The story character developed from week to week as I developed. I had fun, the character had fun. I got mad, the character got mad. I fell in love and so did the character. We were supposed to be two separate entities, one real and the other on paper, but somewhere along the way, we merged into one for a brief period of time. The real world and the fantasy world of

the character got mixed up. When I developed a real hatred for Louis Cox, so did my character. When I practised my quick-draw with my six-gun, so did the character. All the journal was supposed to have been was another novel, a believable novel. A novel, not the real thing. I didn't want to kill anybody for real. I'd hurt people before but I never killed anybody. The only thing I ever killed were make-believe people in hand-written novels. Toy soldiers shot with guns that won't really hurt anybody."

He shook his head very sadly, "I never had any intention of actually shooting anybody. I didn't mean to take anyone's life."

He seemed very distressed and appeared to be on the verge of crying. He almost talked about the crime itself, something we had promised not to do, then suddenly pulled away from the subject. I could actually see him physically withdraw from the edge of the table where he was sitting. I didn't want to lose his confidence by trying to make him talk about the crime. I took another track.

"What about the letters you wrote Louise? The ones placed into evidence. Were they supposed to be a part of the novel, too, or did you really feel the way you wrote?"

"You read the letters? Okay, good, I'm glad you did. Now, have you ever heard me talk like that? No. No, and you won't either. I really did love Louise. I cared for her very much, but the letters are largely nonsense. I don't talk like that as a rule. I wrote her five or six letters and she complained that they were 'cold' so I started writing really stupid ones that oozed with sugar. She loved them. It made her happy so I made an ass of myself by writing them. My feelings for her were very genuine but the letters themselves are garbage. I never expressed myself verbally in the same manner, but she enjoyed the letters. I never rewrote the letters—never had the chance or I would have destroyed them, they were so stupid—but the thoughts behind them are genuine thoughts and expressions of care and love. It's only the format I used that's full of shit."

"But you did rewrite the journal and portions of the three novels placed into evidence at your hearing. Isn't that falsifying evidence?"

"No, I didn't falsify evidence. I wrote something, then rewrote it. A few weeks after the rewriting, my attorney placed the novels and the journal-novel into evidence after Judge Hannah ordered him to do so. Nobody asked me if they were the originals or not. Nobody asked if all four were fiction or only three. They simply accepted them as the originals and didn't bother to check the different ink coloration from page to page like you did. As far as I was concerned they had four rewritten novels to view. They had a differ-



ent interpretation based on what they wanted to believe rather than what was the case.”

“Why would Judge Hannah order your writings placed into evidence?”

“When I went to Topeka—to the Menninger Foundation Clinic—the doctors there read the novels and the journal and used them as part of their diagnostic process. The State complained that they wanted to look at them, too, so Judge Hannah ordered Mr. Hardy to admit them into evidence. The State was mostly interested in the journal but Hardy placed the other novels into evidence along with it. The doctors on both sides argued in the courtroom for hours over their individual interpretation of the contents and I used to crouch down in my chair with my mouth behind my hand so they couldn’t see me grinning at them. I thought it was hilarious.”

“You seem to have a very basic, an almost childish sense of humor. You crack up over practical jokes even when your life is involved,” I said. “How about the rest of the exhibits? Did you fake them, too? I read a half-dozen pages of something you wrote about planning a commando raid on a North Vietnamese P.O.W. camp to try and rescue downed American fliers. Is that a fake? How about the one where you wanted to steal an atomic weapon and start World War III? And what about the 15–20 pages I read describing how you wanted to kidnap a dozen movie stars and ransom them off? Did you write these in the county jail? Or were they real ideas you had? The State used some against you and the defense tried to make you sound insane with some of the others. Did you dupe them with these writings? And what about the barbarian character Conan? Did they misread you on him as well?”

“Oh, no, none of the exhibits were faked. Misrepresented, yes, but faked, no. As you’re already aware, I write stories as a pastime and the bulk of the exhibits are nothing more than story outlines and plots. The outline of the actress kidnapping and ransoming is a short novel of 120 pages I wrote back in 1964. The court saw only the outline, not the actual story. Mother has the story itself at home if you’d care to read it.” (I viewed it a month later at Lucy’s home. The paper on which it is handwritten is yellowing with age. It appears to be authentic.) “I incorporated the outline into the front of the journal and then numbered the pages consecutively so it would appear to be one continuous work. The ink on the text of the outline is different from the ink of the page numbers but nobody ever bothered to notice that; they were too excited about reading the text. When my crime occurred, I never went home again. Mother hid a lot of my stuff rather than have the cops carry it off.

Mr. Hardy asked to view it and she let him have some of it, but not all. He never saw the short novel and I didn't tell him about it so he never knew it was only a story outline. He assumed it was a real plan. The same applied to the raid on North Vietnam. Another story outline. The attempt to steal a nuclear bomb and start another world-wide war should sound familiar. I've seen a number of movies along the same lines: people steal a missile or a Polaris sub and fire away. I never developed either into a story because I was arrested before I could write them. I'm surprised Mr. Glenn, the State's Attorney, didn't dismiss my lawyer's use of the story lines as anything but outlines for stories. The State missed a golden opportunity to blow my whole defense out of the water.

"As far as Conan is concerned," he grinned. "He was real. He was my hero, still is. I like the hell out of him. I don't care for the new stories written by other authors, but the original Robert E. Howard stories are great pulp fiction. Conan did all the things I'd like to do: rescue damsels in distress, battle monsters with sword and axe, clash in terrible combat with enemy warriors. I love books like those and wish I'd been born back in the days when that kind of stuff was still going on."

Chuck went virtually unnoticed in Mattoon until the day of the killings. He worked for a veterinarian, Dr. Elmer Goetz, for a few months in late summer and early autumn of 1967 as part of a school-work program. He loved the animals and took good care of them but "got tired of it" and was fired when his work became sloppy. He got a second job almost immediately at the soon-to-be-opened Gibson's Discount Center where he worked in the warehouse and stockroom. Co-workers remember him for his diligence, organization, and hard work in unloading trailer trucks full of goods and getting them sorted out for the shelves. He developed a system which enabled him to find anything in either the warehouse a block away or at the store stockroom long before the managers could locate the items. After only a few weeks, the other, older boys assigned to the trucks quit and Chuck was promoted to "Dock Foreman." The title didn't mean a thing but Chuck loved being in charge of anything. He worked even harder for a few weeks until he found himself working alone on a job designed for three men. He asked for help but was patted on the head and told he was doing such a good job they didn't need to hire anybody else. "Then how about a raise?" They laughed. He started missing work, calling in sick, trying to force them to hire more workers. They responded by firing him.

Chuck became more attached to Louise during the early winter

of 1967-68 and more disgusted with his own mother. Tom was out of the picture now, but Lucy and Chuck fought and argued over money, the use of her car (his had been left in Dallas), the neglect of his work and school from spending too much time with Louise, and a "thousand other things" to quote Chuck.

"Our fights usually ended with me either going to my room or leaving the house," Chuck remembers with disgust. "She'd scream stuff like: 'I was overly protective of you! That's why you're such a brat!' or I'd threaten to leave home and marry Louise and she'd reply with 'You could never be man enough to support a family!' It was my parents arguing all over again. I really hated it at home. I got edgy, nervous, tried to get out of the house as much as possible, just get away from Mother. I think I almost hated her. She blamed me for everything. I tried to put the storm door on the front door one day but it didn't fit because a chunk of wood from the frame was gone and she blamed me for that, too. All I could think about was getting out of that house."

On the 24th of November, Chuck purchased an Ithica 20-gauge, single-shot shotgun from an uncle's gun shop in Mattoon. He was very careful to keep it away from Sean and never loaded it at home. On weekends, he drove to the Cox house and hunted rabbits with Louise's younger brother, Timmy. Killing rabbits didn't seem to excite or bother him. He just killed them without comment. Timmy showed him how to skin the game and Chuck developed a taste for fresh rabbit.

His relationship with the Cox family improved while his own family life dissolved to nothing. "Like four strangers living together." Candy faded into the background, timid and afraid to anger either her mother or older brother. Chuck and Lucy continued to fight and Lucy actually attacked him at least twice, swinging her fists once and a coat hanger the second time, screaming at him to: "Get out! Get out of my house!"

"I was only 17 then and still had 5 months of school left or I would have joined the Army right then. I thought things would improve without Dad, but they didn't. I wasn't old enough or mature enough to understand the strain Mother was under. I'd never tried to support four people with a paycheck from Woolworth's and had no conception of the pressure she was experiencing. I just saw my own narrow view of things and I wanted out of there as soon as possible."

The Army recruiter told him to finish school first. He registered with the Draft Board but they deferred him until school was out. There was no room at the Cox house for him to move in, either. He felt trapped.

"I dug out my soldiers and blasted the hell out of them," he says. "I hadn't touched them since I first moved to Dallas about 18 months earlier, but they seemed to relieve my tensions. Slaughtering plastic toys is a safe way to work out aggression and I had accumulated nearly a hundred plastic models of various military vehicles and planes in a large box that I hadn't opened in so long that I'd forgotten what all was in there. I scooped them out and selected a half-dozen planes and helicopters and took them out in my backyard. I owned a BB gun replica of an M-1 carbine and I shot the models to pieces with it. When they were gone, I got some more, set them up on a bare patch of muddy ground, and shot them to bits. I had a few firecrackers I'd brought up from Texas and I used them to blast what remained. In one day of mindless destruction, I completely destroyed about seventy-five models worth around a hundred bucks."

"Did you feel better afterwards?"

"Yeah, I did. At first, I didn't feel anything. I could see the little BB's punching holes in the plastic, see the jagged chunks breaking off, but it took me an hour or so before I really got into it. There were pieces of tanks and planes and men scattered all over the mud. I set fire to a few of the larger planes and the thick black smoke from the plastic made it look like a real battlefield. I liked it. It made me feel a lot better to tear something up."

"Did you ever do this to work off tension between yourself and Louise?"

"No, I don't think so. I don't remember it if I did. It was just after fights between Mother and myself."

"How about Sean? You picked on him sometimes, didn't you?"

He suddenly seemed embarrassed, "Yeah, I did for about 2 or 3 months. He was such an easy target. I'd rarely spanked him in the past unless he made a hell of a mess because I figured he wasn't old enough to know what he was doing. He didn't have any real conception of right or wrong when he was little, so I rarely spanked him. But from around late December or early January until late February or early March, I spanked his butt or open-palmed the side of his head for things I used to ignore. He still came to me more than Mom or Candy, but I saw him peeking at me around a corner sometimes wondering if I was in a bad mood or good mood. I was real moody from December until the last of March, couldn't get my thoughts straight, couldn't seem to do anything right, I was confused. I knew I was gonna' get drafted in June, wasn't sure if I was gonna' graduate from school or not because my Economics grade was poor, and my home life was very bad. I took it out on my models usually and on Sean sometimes until one day in March

when I was playing with him on my bed. We were bouncing on the mattress and I had both his arms in my hands and I pulled on his arm too hard and popped it out of the shoulder socket. That was about the third time his arm had popped out, the bones didn't fit right until he was 7 or 8 and an awkward tug on it pulled it right out of socket. He didn't cry but started fussing and Mom and I took him to the emergency room at the hospital and they popped it back in after taking an X-ray. I kept apologizing to him on the way over and back, but he wouldn't say anything to me. I had him in my lap and his little arm was in a sling and he looked up at me real sad and the expression on his face made me feel so bad I damn near cried. I can still remember how he looked at me and it honestly hurt me deep inside. It was only an accident, but I felt terrible about it. He wouldn't come to me again for a day or two and even then he was real careful when he approached. I felt so guilty, I never spanked or hit him again. He broke the stereo in Candy's bedroom one time by mistake and started to run out before I could get him but I told him I would not spank him and he stopped. After that, he never ran from me again. He confidently came to me during the last 5 or 6 weeks I was still free, and I never struck him no matter what he did wrong. If I caught him doing something wrong—like breaking something of mine, which he did quite often—I'd just scold him and he'd hang his head, then I'd give him a hug and a smile and let him know everything was okay. It seemed to have more of an effect on him than spanking him."

"Too bad you didn't know about jogging to relieve your anger."

He laughs, "Yeah, I wish Barb Dolan, the counselor, had been in Mattoon. I could have gone to Vietnam and killed civilians and been a hero instead of going to prison."

Chuck won't discuss his relationship with the Cox family, but it is obvious that in the early part of 1968 he was rapidly beginning to equate the bad things in her family with the bad in his. The lines between the two families blurred and friends quoted him as saying that he felt the Cox family was his family and the Fuller family were "just people I know." He may have identified with Louise to such a point that her personality merged with his. When he complained that she "worked too hard, had to care for 13 or more people, didn't have time for herself, was forced to shovel coal in the family furnace, wash the kids, and do all the work," he was identifying with her much more closely than most people identify with close friends.

He started keeping a journal, not as a diary, but as a new novel. The common theme in all his novels is a hero. A barbarian armed



with axe and sword. An army sergeant with an automatic rifle. A gunslinger with a pistol. A confused schoolboy with a pistol. He confided some of his own innermost thoughts to the journal but it is obvious from the style of the writing that it is semi-fact, semi-fiction. It reads like the first draft of one of his other novels. The rewritten passages prevent it from withstanding a serious examination by qualified authorities but even in its' present state it is interesting as a reflection of his thinking before and after his arrest. It is unfortunate that he doctored so much of the original manuscript in his jail cell. Even though intended as a novel, it would have been a useful and meaningful piece of evidence for the court in its original state. It would have at least partially mirrored the mind of Chuck Fuller and helped explain the events which led up to the tragic incident at the old Cox house on the 27th of April. As it is, it is a worthless collection of yellowing paper and fading ink.

In late January of 1968, Chuck sold his nearly-new 20-gauge shotgun for less than half what he had paid for it. He took the money from the sale, added it to the cash he received by emptying his bank account, and went on a shopping spree. He spent nearly \$100.00 on Louise and another \$50.00 on Sean, Lucy, and Candy. He also bought himself a single gift: a .22 caliber Western-style pistol, serial no. 62746, manufactured by the Hawes Firearms Co. The pistol was sold to him by an employee of Gaines Sporting Goods Store in downtown Mattoon.

"You were only 18 then," I said to him on the phone late one evening in May of 1980. "How the hell could you buy a pistol when the legal age for pistol ownership was 21?"

"The lady who waited on me didn't even ask for an ID," he answered bitterly. "I told her I was 18 and asked if I needed a co-signer or had to have an adult buy it for me but she just smiled and said, 'No, you look like a nice young boy to me.' The fifty bucks I gave her was old enough even if I wasn't."

Very little was ever said about the illegal gun sale. Chuck had purchased the shotgun several months previously but Lucy had accompanied him and given her consent. Even at 17, shotgun ownership in 1968 was legal when the buyer was accompanied by an adult who made the actual purchase. But in 1968, as now, the legal age for pistol ownership was 21 years of age regardless of who accompanied the buyer. Chuck was a minor in 1968 and, as such, legally could not buy a pistol. He bought one anyway.

After the killings, the woman who made the illegal gun sale was quoted as saying that Lucy had given her verbal okay over the phone. Lucy emphatically denies this and says she assumed in 1968 that

the gun sale was legal since Chuck made the purchase through legal channels from a reputable gun shop. Several things need to be pointed out. First of all, the gun sale was illegal. The legal age was 21. Chuck had just turned 18. The law makes no exceptions. Chuck was three years away from the legal age. The sale was entered into the stores' ledger books with copies going to the proper State and Federal authorities, but no mention was made of the fact that Chuck was a minor. As far as the authorities were concerned, the sale was legal. The woman who sold him the gun knew better. Secondly, the woman's claim that Lucy had given her okay over the phone is ridiculous. Even with a written letter of consent, the sale was illegal, let alone a phone call which Lucy denies was ever made. Regardless of whether the phone call was made or whether it wasn't, the law was still broken. A minor was allowed to purchase a pistol contrary to State and Federal laws then in existence.

I was puzzled as to why no charges were ever filed against the saleswoman.

"She was, and is, married to a very prominent businessman in the Coles County area," Chuck growled. "The police investigated where the gun came from but as soon as they came to the end of the line the whole investigation came to a screeching halt. If she'd just been some poor middle-class woman, they'd have charged her with the crime. But as soon as they heard her name, they shut the whole thing up."

The investigation into the question of who illegally sold a pistol to a minor never got off the ground. No charges were ever filed. Another curious note: the 3 pages of Chuck's journal dealing with the gun sale are missing. They have simply ceased to exist since the hearing in Aggravation and Mitigation in 1968. The only people to exercise control over the journal since that time: courthouse employees. Chuck has a Xerox'd copy of the journal and the 3 pages are also missing from it.

"The Coles County Clerk, Charles Authenreith, has finally started to obey the law by providing me with parts of my transcript," Chuck said. "He's been dragging his feet as much as possible, but finally provided my attorneys with part of the record of my case. One thing he gave up was a copy of the journal—something I really didn't need since it's bullshit, anyway—and the 3 pages were gone from it, too. Curious, huh?"

Curious indeed.

Chuck bought a black leather holster for the pistol at Warehouse Sales in Mattoon. The holster was too long for the gun barrel but the cylinder and handle fit perfectly so he paid a \$1.98 for it, looped

a spare Western-style belt through it, and wore it like a movie gunslinger. Photos of him taken by Louise and Timmy show him wearing the gun either slung low on his right thigh like Clint Eastwood or buckled tightly across his left front waist like Lee Van Cleef.

"I went to all the Italian-made Westerns that came to town," he told me on the phone from Menard one evening. "Clint Eastwood was okay, but I liked Lee Van Cleef better back then. I liked the way he wore his gun. I used to practice my quick-draw from both positions. What'd I shoot? Anything. Tree trunks, tin cans, ceramic tiles, rabbits, birds, you name it and I shot at it. I often carried 100-200 rounds with me and used them all up on a typical weekend. .22 ammo was about 2¢ a bullet then so target practice was a pretty cheap activity."

Chuck and Timmy spent each weekend walking the woods, Chuck with his pistol and Timmy with his 20-gauge automatic shotgun. They began a pattern that would last to the end of April: Chuck came to the Cox house each Saturday and Sunday morning, helped Louise with her chores until lunch, ate, and then the older boys would go hunting the rest of the day. The evenings were reserved for Chuck and Louise once the other kids were asleep.

No one seems sure when the change began, but indications are that sometime during January or early February, Chuck's attitude toward the Cox family changed. He began to quietly inform Louise of his dislike for her mother, her family in general—except for Louise and Timmy—and his rapidly growing dislike for her twin brother, Edward Louis.

"Louie," as they called Edward Louis Cox, led a life which paralleled Chuck's in many ways. He was a problem at home and at school. He was not into the type of pranks Chuck loved but he liked to roam the streets at night and enjoyed being the center of attention in his own small group of six or seven boys and girls his age. Most of his group are married now, have children, and are working various jobs in and around Coles County. Two have been in Pontiac and Menard prisons for theft, burglary, and rape. Only one of the group agreed to talk to me.

Bonnie is 30 now, the divorced mother of two small children. She remembers both Louie and the boy she calls "Charlie."

"I loved Charlie, but he didn't like me," she said as we sat at the kitchen table in her small apartment in a low-income housing project in Mattoon. "I was an easy lay and everybody at school knew it. I had a bad reputation and guys like Charlie wouldn't be caught dead taking me out. I loved him and liked his sister but Louise hated me. She blamed me for telling Louie to run away from home

but Louie told me he hated it at home, that Mr. Cox favored Timmy over him, and that he couldn't stand his father. Louie hated Mr. Cox. He moved in with me for a few days a couple of times and I really liked Louie, you know. I was into pot and LSD then but Louie wouldn't do either. He and his little friends were into glue but a bunch of the kids at school either did glue or sniffed gas tanks so that wasn't unusual. It was like drinking beer or something, you know. I told him I thought it was stupid and tried to get him into the good stuff, but he wouldn't take it."

Bonnie was chain-smoking cigarettes as the interview continued. Her hair was pulled back in a ragged pony tail, her complexion was ashen, her teeth seemed bad and the apartment was very messy. Her eyelids were heavy. I figured she was on something.

"I loved Charlie," she continued. "Man, I loved him. He's the kinda' guy a girl can go to and rap to and get a shoulder to cry on and I really loved him, you know. He hated me and I think it was because Louise was so jealous that when I got around him, he had to run me off or she'd get pissed at him. I wanted to suck his dick so bad, it was pitiful, ya' know what I mean? But I had Louie living with me for a while off and on, whenever he and his dad had another fight, and I liked the hell out of him, too. Louie was with me a couple of days before he ran off and tried to leave the state and I tried to talk to him, to keep him from going, but he wouldn't listen. He told me he had to get away from his dad. That's why he ended up in jail."

"In jail?" I was incredulous. Chuck had not told me that Edward Louis Cox had been in jail.

"Yeah, he and a few of his friends ran away from home, stole a car, tried to burglarize some store or something, I forget now, it was so long ago. They got busted and they all went to jail for a week or two. I think he got out a day before he got killed but I'm not sure. I hated to hear he was dead, I really liked the hell out of him, you know, but I couldn't believe Charlie did it. It's really weird, huh?"

"Did Charlie do drugs? Anything at all? How about Louise?"

"No, not Louise. Charlie did LSD once or twice but he went crazy and didn't do it anymore. I don't think he did any for a couple of months before the time of the crime."

"Was he on drugs at the time of the crime?"

"Sure. Didn't they tell you? I gave Louie a handful of LSD tabs when he got out of jail and he dumped them in a glass of water he gave Charlie. They hated each other and Louie wanted to fuck

up Charlie's mind. Only Charlie didn't go out the way Louie thought he would."

She was starting to nod and her speech was slurring.

"Are you on drugs now?" I asked quietly.

"No," she mumbled. "I don't do drugs anymore. I'm into pills, you know. On 'ludes. Quaaludes, you know. That ain't drugs. Hey, you gonna' see Charlie again? Tell him I said hi, huh? Maybe I can visit him or something."

On the phone that night, I asked Chuck if the story of Louie's arrest was true.

"Oh, yeah, shit, I forgot all about that. He ran away one time to get away from his father and he stole a car. Ask Mother for my Post-Conviction transcript. It's in there. We had the same defense attorney—Cherikos—and I used that in my Post-Conviction petition in an attempt to show a conflict of interest between his representation of a victim and a defendant. I got a copy of Louie's entire file and sent it home for safekeeping after my appeal was turned down."

The four pages of legal documents for Edward Louis Cox, Docket No. 68-FJ-268, show that he was placed in the Coles County Jail on or before April 19, 1968 when he made his preliminary appearance in court. He was officially charged with obtaining "unauthorized control over certain property, to wit; a 1960 Chevrolet of a total value in excess of \$150.00, and then and there being the property of Gary Wilson with intent to deprive said Gary Wilson permanently of the use and benefit of said property." Louie was held in the Coles County Jail until the morning of April 24, 1968 when he was released into the custody of his parents. At the time of his release, he had less than 78 hours to live.

"I don't remember all of it now. I think he and a couple of his little buddies stole the car in Mattoon and later got caught stealing a camera from some store, but they only charged Louie with the car. He appeared in court once or twice but never received any type of punishment. Funny thing, though, they put me in the same cell he came out of."

"How about the drugs, Chuck?" I asked. "Bonnie isn't the first person to tell me you drank water with LSD in it on the morning of the crime."

He seemed to get angry, the first time I'd seen him nearly lose his temper.

"Bonnie may be in Mattoon, but her brain is in a jar on Mars. I never did any drugs in Mattoon and neither did Louise. I've never done any drugs at all. Louie used to do the kid stuff so many others



did but no 'hard stuff' as far as I know. And that bullshit rumor about the glass of water with LSD is just that: bullshit."

"I've had several people tell me a similar story, Chuck. They claim the LSD Louie had was given to you. You two didn't like each other, that's a known fact, and the way I hear it. . . ."

"You heard wrong," he growled, then seemed to quickly recover and extinguish his anger. "I hated Louie, that's a fact. I couldn't stand him. He was everything I really disliked in other people: a smart-mouthed, trouble-making little punk. It didn't surprise me that he got busted and sent to jail. He used to stir up trouble with other couples, including Louise and I. I remember once when he told me that another boy was going around at school claiming to have picked Louise's cherry since I'd been dating her. I went looking for the other boy with a knife in my boot only to have some of my friends come running after me to tell me that Louie had made it all up, told me that just to fuck with me. He tried a lot of dirty shit like that to start arguments and try to break us up. I hated that little punk."

During the psychiatric interviews between Chuck and Dr. Satten at the Menninger Clinic on September 19, 1968, Chuck expressed at least a token sympathy for Louie after Louie was beaten by Mr. Cox for fighting with Timmy. I asked him about the sympathy.

"Yeah, I had sympathy for him once. Timmy and Louie were fighting in the kitchen and Mr. Cox came in, grabbed Louie, threw him down, pounded on him, and then threw him out of the house. It was so unfair that I actually felt sorry for him. Timmy was always the pet and Louie caught hell all the time. It's no wonder he ran off."

"But you hated him?"

"I hated him. Mrs. Cox said that Louise and I couldn't go out unless we took him along—especially after he started having brushes with the law. I really got pissed. I was supposed to babysit this guy and I couldn't stand him. They pushed him off on us and I hated him even more. When he got out of jail in April, he bragged to me about it, told me how he smarted off to the judge, thought he was a big man. I couldn't stand him."

The sympathy-hatred feelings and the rough similarity between Chuck and Louie prompted me to contact a psychologist-friend for an opinion of the situation. I was very surprised at what he told me.

"Murder is a form of suicide directed outwards," Dr. Sydney Goldstein told me. "The aggressor, many times, will commit suicide after his victim is dead. There are many, many documented cases of mur-

der-suicide and in the bulk of the others, the so-called straight murder cases, we see a desire for suicide expressed by the aggressor following his crime. In this case, we have an aggressor and a victim who have both been in trouble, were trouble-makers at school, their grades in class are fair to poor, they don't relate to society very easily, and they both spend their free time idly wandering about either engaging in petty mischief in one case or the adolescent sexual activity and glue sniffing in the other. We also have violence in both homes, the father of the victim obviously disgusted with the victim, the mother of the aggressor violent against the aggressor. There are a very large number of parallels to be drawn between the two boys."

"Which means what?" I asked.

"The conclusion is pretty obvious. The aggressor lived in a fantasy world to escape the problems he faced in the real world. When the victim was forced upon the aggressor by figures of authority—in this case the parents of the victim—in such a manner that it was no longer possible to get away from the victim, the aggressor felt trapped in the real world. He tried to escape from his own home by going to the home of the victim as much as possible, he was not yet old enough to go to the Army, and the temporary safety of the victim's home now became a threatening place to him because of his growing dislike for the victim. He felt trapped on all sides. It wasn't long before the aggressor saw himself mirrored by the victim. When he was disgusted with the victim, he was actually disgusted with himself. Victim and aggressor became confused in the aggressor's mind. When the aggressor fired his pistol, he was committing suicide. He was killing himself, his mirrored image. The other killings were incidental, terribly unfortunate, unnecessary. Had the other victims not been around, they would not have been harmed. The aggressor was committing a ritual suicide and the only victim needed was Edward Louis Cox."

"Chuck Fuller was killing himself?" I couldn't believe it.

"That's correct. From the things you've allowed me to read about the case, he apparently shot Edward Louis—Louie as you call him—and the other boys as part of one continuous action. He wanted to kill Louie—himself—and the other boys were simply there. He never gave them a thought. The two girls were later killed to keep the bodies of the boys from being discovered before he had time to get away once he realized what he had done. You should keep in mind the fact that two other girls were inside the house, alone, unprotected, totally vulnerable. Yet they lived. Why?"

"You tell me."

"After the ritual suicide, with three boys dead, he felt he would receive the death penalty for his crime. He says this himself in the video tapes 'you kill three people they are going to execute you just once and you kill five they can still only execute you once.' The girls were running around between the house and the corn crib and they might have found the bodies very shortly. They also died. But the two girls inside the house were busy making beds and doing other chores. They weren't going to go out back, they were too busy inside. They were totally vulnerable, but they lived. He couldn't bring himself to shoot them because they represented no threat to him of any kind.

"To go a step further, if he was hell-bent on slaughter, he could easily have killed the two girls in the house, then killed the women as they returned from town, and later even ambushed Mr. Cox and Timmy. He could easily have killed 13 or 14 people and the bodies would not have been found for many hours or even days. But he didn't."

"Why didn't he go through with the plan of his make-believe character in the journal? It would have been easy, as you say."

"He was disgusted by what had happened. His pistol was empty when he was arrested which I find significant especially in light of the fact that he had more than half a box of ammunition in his pocket. Either consciously or subconsciously, it was his way of saying that he would never kill again. He also wished to be caught and punished for his act as evidenced by his casual walk down a main street in Charleston. I would imagine that he's also either contemplated or actually attempted suicide one or more times since his arrest. The toe-to-fang duels with the snakes in Texas are further evidence of a tendency toward self-destruction."

"What would trigger an incident like this?"

"There doesn't seem to be a single trigger, at least on the surface. The electroencephalogram showing him to be suffering from diencephalic epilepsy is probably the cause of his repeated violent acts and may be the trigger of this tragic incident as well, although it's impossible for me to speculate with much authority without a full review of his entire case history. It would appear that the stresses placed on him over the years were relieved through his periodic explosions of violence, rather than continuing to build within him as some of the defense attorneys and witnesses claimed. Upon a closer examination, I think we will find a combination of factors ultimately led to his breakdown. We have the destructive home life of his own family mirrored by key members of the Cox family, the strain of the military draft waiting to take him, his failing school

grades, lack of proper discipline and supervision, his inability to relate to the real world in general and people in particular, and the EEG scan showing the epilepsy. The EEG scan is of particular interest due to the astonishing growth of the field of electroencephalography during the past 15 years. It's the future, I think, and I'm going back to school myself to learn more about it. Psychiatrists have been wrong in their diagnoses so often in the past and so many forms of treatment are utter failures that I think the future of mental health lies in a three-pronged approach at treatment: psychological testing, followed by EEG scans, and final treatment with drugs. Some day, all people arrested for a violent crime will promptly have EEG's made. It may help us in our overall treatment approach and will certainly aid in identifying the people who need drug treatment rather than simple hospitalization or imprisonment. This case here, the Fuller case, is very strange and offers room for further testing and diagnosis. I would be very happy to waive my usual fee if he would agree to cooperate in an examination and interview. Provided, of course, that he doesn't tell me the fairy tales he told the other psychologists."

"No, I won't do it," Chuck replied when I called him." The psych interviews are a lot of bullshit. You can make them believe anything you want them to believe. I fooled some of the best in the country and I can trick this fellow just as easily. I do agree with him about the hit-and-miss treatments they've used in the past, though. With all the advances being made in chemical therapy and other fields, I think psychiatrists will probably go the way of the dinosaur before too much longer. I'm sorry, Diane, but I just don't have any faith in them and I will not cooperate with them."

"A favorable report may help you get a parole."

"When pigs fly. The Parole Board doesn't give a shit about the people whose cases it reviews. It lets one murderer go free and denies another parole. It releases rapists and denies parole to car thieves. I can think of a dozen cases where men have committed identical crimes yet some do twice as much time as others for no apparent reason. Parole release decisions in Illinois—and elsewhere—are crude, inadequate, and unreasonable. The methods used to determine who should or should not be released is lawless and irrational. Certain convicts are selected at random to make parole while others are chosen to become 'examples' who are forced to serve additional time in prison in order to satisfy the Board's punitive whims. They don't give a shit about a good psych report. They know the psychs are often just as phony as they are, that they're often paid to make good reports or bad reports depending on who's

paying them. The only real difference between the paid psych and the Board members is the fact that the psych is paid for his job and the Board members either pay to get theirs or are given them as reward for some political good deed. They're nothing more than political flunkies and every time the Governor changes, so do the members of the Parole Board.

"They don't care about a psych report," Chuck added. "They don't care how many letters people write for or against you, either. All they care about is keeping their jobs. Since 1978, no one sentenced to prison in Illinois is eligible for parole. Everyone sentenced under the new laws passed into effect January 1, 1978, are on flat time—you do one day of your sentence and one day more is taken off for good behavior. None of those guys even see the Parole Board, none are eligible for parole. In 1979, the Parole Board spent 3 days a month at Menard hearing parole cases. Now, they spend one day a month and much of that day is occupied with heavy coffee drinking and two-hour lunches. They're rapidly running out of people eligible for parole so, the fewer of us left, the less chance for a parole. Afterall, with only about 1,800 of Illinois 12,000 convicts still eligible, the Board would phase itself out of a job if they paroled all the people who have earned it."

"You think they deny parole to people simply to keep their jobs?"

"No, not simply to keep their jobs. There is no doubt that some of their decisions are designed to keep maggots like Speck off the streets for good, but they also deny a lot of people who will probably never commit another crime in their lives. The Board is running out of work to do so rapidly that they're now reduced to reviewing decisions to revoke Good Time, time off your sentence for good behavior. That's something a guard Captain and the Warden used to do for a hell of a lot less money than the Board members get.

"I celled with a guy at Menard who was doing 1-5 years for stealing a car. While he was there, he got raped by some ape and the rape fucked his mind up. Here was a kid who had never been arrested before in his life and was just out joy-riding in somebody else's car when he got busted. The Parole Board turned him down for parole the first time up. At the same time they denied him his freedom, they released 63 other men including 1 murderer and 6 rapists. Now does that make any sense? And here's a footnote for you: when he finally did make parole after doing 2 years, his mind was so warped that he kidnapped and annally raped a pregnant Charleston woman and later shot an old man in the forehead with a pistol. By a miracle, the old man lived. There's a fine case for you. A kid who shouldn't have been in prison to begin with gets denied parole and raped and turned into an animal while he's there. He's done



three prison terms since then that I know of. So much for rehabilitation."

"He kidnapped a Charleston woman? Was he from your area?"

"He's living in Charleston now. He was from Mattoon to begin with. There are 39 ex-convicts in Coles County that I know by name and there may be others as well."

"Do you maintain contact with any of them?"

"Oh, sure. I get information from them through other people. One guy will get a visit and pass messages on to 5 or 6 other guys. We're probably better informed about each other than the cops. One guy who was here was arrested in Missouri and we knew about it at the prison before the daily newspapers printed it in Missouri."

"Do any of the ex-cons try to help?"

The line was silent for a half-minute. Chuck seemed reluctant to talk.

"They do favors," he said quietly. "They've done things out of loyalty, paid me for past favors, done things I've asked them to do, even done things I never asked them to do. When a teacher at one of the Mattoon schools started picking on Sean simply because he was my brother, the teacher's car and house got vandalized to the tune of about \$4,000. I didn't have to ask anyone to do that, it was just done. I won't discuss anything else people have done for me."

"You allowed me to go through some of your Post-Conviction forms. Was that the only appeal you ever filed or did you try something else?"

"I filed the PC in early 1969 and finally had a hearing on September 7, 1971. My main allegation was that my chief attorney, Hardy, had a conflict of interest because he not only represented me in the criminal case but also signed a contract with me to help me publish my life story and my novels. It was a hell of a good argument for appeal. Naturally, Coles County denied it and I appealed to the Appellate Court which took 3 more years before they heard it and finally handed down their decision. There are three judges on the Appellate Court and 1 voted to reverse my conviction but the other 2 voted to let it stand. The main argument for denying a reversal of my conviction was the fact that Cherikos was also a defense attorney and 'consulted with the defendant many times at the county jail' and estimated the number of visits to be between 25 and 30. They admitted that Hardy's entering into the contract was a violation of law" (violation of Illinois Code of Professional Responsibility, Canon 5, DR 5-104 (3), ed.) "but said that having Cherikos visit me at the county jail for conferences made up for it."

"You seem bitter about it."

"I am. In 1969, I filed a proper, legal petition for a copy of my transcript and Judge Robert Cotton ordered 2 copies made: 1 for me and the second for the state. I've been trying to get my copy since 1969."

I was stunned, "You've *never* gotten your transcript?"

"No. I've never even seen it. I'll send you copies of all the letters I've written trying to get it." (The letters, beginning in 1969 and continuing through 1981, make a pile nearly 2" thick. They cite legal reasons for receiving the transcript ranging from Illinois cases to rules of the Supreme Court). "How the fuck do they expect me to obey the law when they refuse to obey it? I've even got a 2-page court order from Judge Cotton to provide me with the transcript but he's no longer on the bench and the Powers That Be now in office refuse to obey. The bastards are violating the law every day they don't provide me with my transcript. One of the things that really pisses me off is that one of my attorneys, Roger Tuttrup of Carbondale, finally got copies of some of the exhibits including my journal and a bunch of letters I wrote while I was in the county jail which, unknown to me, the State's Attorney was photocopying before sending them out. The letters were to my mother and sister and are filled with references about Cherikos like: 'Have you seen him?' 'If you see him, have him stop by some time before I forget what he looks like.' The letters are proof that he only came to the jail 4 or 5 times like I claimed in my PC petition but I didn't get the letters until this year—10 years too late. Now, the scum bags won't supply me with the rest of the exhibits or the transcript of the Aggravation and Mitigation Hearing because they don't want me to file anything else in the way of an appeal. I can't file anything without the transcript and they know it. But there's one thing I can't understand: why don't they want me to file an appeal? What's wrong with the case that they can't accept a challenge to it in open court?"

I was a little more than curious when I made a few phone calls to the courthouse in Charleston. As soon as they heard who I was calling about, the personnel at the County Clerk's office suddenly developed lock jaw and/or amnesia. I tried another tactic: I spoke with a former employee of the State's Attorney's office. "John" was very talkative.

"They won't provide him with the transcript for several reasons. First of all, his case is still yesterday's news in Coles County and anyone who tries to help him is in for a hard time at the courthouse. I found that out when I tried to help him. My crime: trying to obey the law by providing him with what he is legally entitled to receive.

I got the axe because I believe in equal justice for everyone, even Fuller. I helped him get the small portion of transcript and the few exhibits he has received or he wouldn't even have that much. The second reason, the most important by far, is the fact that the idiots who have worked in the Clerk's office through the years have lost a hell of a lot of it. They've lost both copies of the Aggravation and Mitigation Hearing transcript—probably the most important thing for Fuller to receive. They've also lost entire exhibits including one of his novels, pages from the journal, pictures from his wallet apparently stolen by souvenir hunters, even bullets. The morons even had Fuller's gun on a goddamned pegboard display in the Sheriff's office with a bunch of other weapons confiscated from arrested individuals over the years. That display was on the wall for nearly six months and more than a hundred people were allowed to play with the pistol. They might not know anything about rules of evidence in the Clerk's Office, but I can assure them that if Fuller ever gets a reversal of his conviction, they'll never be able to use a single one of those exhibits. They haven't been properly, and legally, preserved. That's why they refuse to comply with the law, his letters, and the letters of his attorneys: they can't comply. They've fucked their job up so badly, they'll all be looking for work if the Federal people step into it."

"Aren't they supposed to keep all old exhibits in a vault?" I asked.

John laughed, "They had transcript, exhibits, blood-stained clothes, and God knows what else piled in a corner of the fucking courthouse attic. Renovators were working up there and started to throw out what looked like trash to them but they called me up before they acted or Fuller's entire case would have gone out in the garbage. I've seen courthouse employees playing with the gun, passing around pictures of the victims, a couple of Deputies from the Sheriff's Office carried off the Conan paperback books to read on duty and never brought them back, one even strapped on the holster and strutted around practicing his quick-draw. I've never seen an office or a case so badly handled in my life."

Chuck and his attorneys, Jan Susler and Roger Tuttrup, continue to badger Coles County officials to comply with the law concerning his transcript, but the officials seldom respond to the attorneys and never respond to Chuck. "The law is written in such a way that Chuck is legally entitled to his transcript but there is no clause governing what is to be done if the officials refuse to obey.

"It's okay," Chuck laughed over the phone when I told him of my talk with John. "The longer they hold out, the more exhibits they lose. There's no doubt the scum bags will obey the law sooner

or later and I've learned to be very patient since I've been locked up. The longer they continue to break the law, the more it goes in my favor in the long run."

"What do you think of the criminal justice system in general?"

"It's okay. It's the hemorrhoids who run it that fuck it up. Most people are generally satisfied with it, I think, including the cons. That old stereotype Late Show con who claims his innocence is almost nowhere to be found. 90% pleaded guilty to get here; it's the only way the system can continue to operate. It would come to a screeching halt if everyone demanded jury trials. I've been locked up 13 years now and I've only met 2 guys who claim to be innocent. The first one seriously told me that he wasn't guilty of rape. He said he put a knife to the throat of an 87 year old woman and she voluntarily took her panties off, he didn't rape her! The other guy is Robert Lee 'Bobby' Stock from Chicago. A lot of kinky cases come out of Chicago. Bobby was a heroin addict and a thief, been a thief all his life, said he likes the hours. An A&P got knocked over and the manager was murdered in March of 1968 about the same time Bobby o.d.'d on heroin. A woman and her son just happened to be driving through an alley behind the A&P as the bandit made his exit and the car headlights lit him up for a few seconds before he fled around a corner. The following day, Bobby is in the hospital recovering from the o.d. and the police bring in the woman and her son and ask them if Bobby was the bandit. They both said no and left. Bobby was set free. Two days later, the A&P grocery chain put out a \$5,000 reward for anyone who identified and helped convict the bandit. The lineup was held and the mother and son were told that the same Robert Stock, their chief suspect, would be standing before them. The lineup consisted of eight men and each was asked to step forward and state his name and address. Right after Bobby stepped forward and stated his name, the mother and son said, 'By, God, that is him afterall.' They charged him with armed robbery and murder and gave him 125-150 years for it. I first met Bobby in Menard in the early 70's and he's at Hillsboro now. We worked in the library together at Menard and he was reading through the Action Line complaint column of the Chicago Tribune one day when he started yelling and pointing at it. The woman and her son hadn't received the \$5,000 yet and wanted to know why! I thought it was hilarious but Bobby didn't."

"They never paid the woman for turning him in?"

"I don't know if she's gotten it yet or not. As long as you appeal your case, it's not considered closed and they won't pay her until it is. He says he's innocent and I believe him. He's been a thief



since he was a kid but he's never hurt anybody. He's the only innocent guy I've ever come across so the system seems to work pretty well. Everybody else here is guilty."

"What about the prison system?"

He made a sound over the receiver like somebody had kicked him, "I knew you'd ask that. I really don't know what prisons are supposed to accomplish. Whatever it is, they don't do it. It doesn't stop people from committing crimes, that's for sure. Burglaries are common inside prison, usually of cells but occasionally of the commissary or hospital drug room or some other official-controlled area. Theft is common place. Rapes occur, usually of men including a number of male guards, but at least 2 women employees have been raped as well. A young librarian at Stateville was raped by some ape her first day on the job and a woman guard was captured inside the cellblock at Pontiac during the '78 riot when 3 guards were butchered for no reason. They rescued the woman guard after she'd been held hostage for 3 hours, but they never did find all her clothes. Armed robberies of employees by masked men at Stateville are common, too. Murders are rare now, but they still occur. Usually it's a staff member who dies but a con gets killed every now and then. You name the crime and it goes on, so the argument that being in prison prevents you from committing crimes is bullshit and such crime is growing all the time.

"And prison itself certainly isn't a deterrent. While I was at Menard, there must have been 25 or 30 guards fired for crimes ranging from stealing State property—everything from furniture to live cattle from the farm—to kidnapping and rape cases in surrounding communities. One pretty little woman guard even had the hubcaps stolen from her car while it was parked in the prison parking lot! Some deterrent, huh?

"The prisons themselves are so full, they've freed nearly 2,000 men in the past three years just to make room for 2,000 more. They've run out of space and it just doesn't make sense to stack us in like cordwood. They're going to have to come up with some other solution. Prison just doesn't do whatever it is it's supposed to do."

"You mentioned women guards and I saw a lot of women while I was at Menard. That was a shock to me. I thought a prison for men would only have male employees."

He laughed loudly, "When I left Menard, there were about 500 or 600 employees all together and 150 of them were women. Most of them are clerks and secretaries, but a growing number are guards. Plus, they've got women counselors, nurses, technicians, miscella-



neous hospital workers, food supervisors, you name it. Here at Hillsboro, we've even got a woman Assistant Warden. She's a hell of a nice woman, too."

"How does having women around affect you and the other men?"

"It doesn't bother me. I don't like the women guards to frisk search me and I also object to them coming into the housing units while I'm either in the shower or using the toilet, but other than that I don't care. It was a big deal at first when I was in the commissary and I got to talk daily to a woman over the phone for the first time in 6 years and it was really nice to work in the Officer's Commissary and talk with them there, too, but the newness of it wears off pretty quickly. I treated them the same as the male employees but I used to look forward to Christmas and other special occasions during the year when the women would bring in home-made cookies and cakes."

"Do the other men object to the frisk searches by women guards?"

"Some like it," he laughed again. "A small minority *really* like it, but the majority resent it, and another small minority refuse to be frisked by a woman regardless of the uniform she's wearing. Women guards are allowed to search male inmates but male guards aren't allowed to touch female inmates—a true double standard. Women employees are searched only by women guards, male employees only by male guards, but male inmates can be searched by women guards. That's unfair as hell, but I've been searched so many times in the past 13 years, I really don't care anymore. I only tried to avoid 1 woman guard at Menard. She had a habit of double-checking your groin to see if you had anything interesting in there and I used to get such a hard-on from her search that it fucked up my whole day. I tried to keep away from her."

"Was she attractive?"

"She had a face like a horse and a body like Porky Pig. If I ever get into bestiality, there's a woman for me."

"Have any of the women employees been caught having sexual relations with convicts?"

About 10 women and 1 guy got caught the last 3 years I was there. The guy was a fag guard. A couple of the women worked in the Psychiatric Center right next to Menard's General Division where I was, I was a counselor, and the rest were nurses."

"Sounds like prison might be fun for some people."

"I can think of worse places to be."

"Really? Where?"

"Cleveland."

## CHAPTER FIVE

Tom and Cooky drove up from Texas in March of 1968 in a red and white 1960 Chevy convertible. Tom stayed only a few days, presented the car to Chuck as a graduation present, warned him that the "oil" warning light had a tendency to flash on and off, then flew back to Texas. Cooky moved into Lucy's small frame house at 2716 Marshall Avenue with her two little boys, Brian and Brennan. Cooky, in the middle of a divorce from her husband, was 8 months pregnant with her third child, her first daughter.

Chuck thought the '60 Chevy was "a little gaudy," but he liked the increased mobility it gave him and it stopped arguments with Lucy over use of her car. Unfortunately, the oil light was blinking on and off for a reason: the oil pan was cracked. One day in early April, after a garage mechanic had assured him that it was just a short in the light, the oil gushed out of the muddy pan and the engine burnt itself to a grinding halt in the driveway of the Cox house. Back to borrowing Lucy's car. Or walking.

During the last few weeks of his life in the free world, Chuck's mental attitude seems to have changed for the better. He was no longer moody, no longer spanked Sean, and fights between himself and Lucy were limited to short verbal exchanges. He was his usual quiet self at home, replying in monosyllables when spoken to, but never beginning conversations with anyone but Sean. His attitude towards the Cox family also leveled out: he loved Louise, hated Louie, and showed more mild contempt than dislike for the rest of the family. There were no fights, no heated verbal battles, no indication of any inner violence nearing the surface. His February request to Louise's parents that he and Louise be allowed to marry was turned down because "she's too young." He was apparently angry for several weeks after the refusal but grew to accept it. His

letters to Louise and her notes to him at school indicate a growing willingness to wait until she graduated from high school and he completed his obligatory 2 year service in the Army before they finally married. His ROTC instructor, Lt. Col. Harry Tuma, remembers talking to Chuck in late April about joining the Army and remarked that "Fuller would have made a fine officer." As far as anyone in Mattoon was concerned, Chuck Fuller was simply a face in a crowd of other teen seniors nearing Graduation Day.

But somewhere in the back of his mind, Chuck Fuller may have wanted to kill Louie Cox and perhaps other members of the Cox family—except Louise—as well. The fictional hero of his journal-novel was certainly intent on killing people, any people if need be, but the family of his fictional girlfriend were the prime targets. The lines between the novel hero and the real boy apparently blurred and crossed. Why they crossed may never be known. Judge Hannah, after hearing from some of the most noted psychiatrists in the country, rejected the defense of insanity. If Chuck was not suffering from a mental disease, then why did the crime occur? Even people who have spoken with Chuck can only guess at a reason for the crossing. The often-cited State "motives" pinned the shootings either on Chuck's jealousy of the time Louise spent caring for her family or on his anger at being refused permission to marry her. Neither reason holds up to careful analysis. Chuck spent only 1 or 2 days a week at the Cox house and even then divided his time between being with Louise and hunting in the surrounding fields and woods. On a number of occasions, he actually spent more time hunting rabbits with Timmy than talking with Louise. There were times when he wanted to be alone with his girlfriend but couldn't because of the nearness of the other family members, but the little ones were generally in bed by late evening and Chuck often stayed until 2 or 3 a.m. some Sunday mornings. During the week, he and Louise had a class together at school, ate lunch together, and passed notes between classes. The only member of the Cox family ever forced upon them was Louie and even he preferred the company of Bonnie and her friends over Chuck and Louise whom he termed "too square." There was plenty of time for the two young lovers to be alone and if Chuck had wanted to spend more time with Louise, he could easily have gone to her house during the week as well as the weekends. The second State motive, the denial of Louise's hand in marriage, again falls apart under analysis. Chuck requested the marriage in early February, the killings occurred in late April. More than 80 days passed between the two dates. Either Chuck is incredibly slow to anger—certainly not the case as shown by his past violent out-

bursts—or, as the hand-written notes between Chuck and Louise indicate, his initial anger dissipated quickly into resignation. The notes reflect his dislike for Louie but there is no mention of the rest of the Cox family.

The defense attorney anchored their case on an insanity defense. It failed. The death penalty was avoided but that was probably due to Chuck's age, his soft-spoken and polite manner in court, and the fact that Judge Hannah, nearly 80 years old, had only a few more years to live and was therefore more respectful of human life than a younger judge might have been in a similar situation. Judge Hannah may have been influenced by the re-written novels and was certainly influenced by the novel-journal and Chuck's appearance on the video tapes. In one scene on the tapes, while under the influence of sodium amytal and while recounting the details of the crime itself, Chuck began crying and muttering "I want to die. I'm so sorry. I want to die." Chuck's obvious remorse helped sway Judge Hannah away from the electric chair.

Neither the State nor the defense proved what they wanted to prove. The State's "motives" were no more than uneducated guesses based largely on Chuck's novel-journal which they accepted at face value. Had he destroyed the novel instead of rewriting it in his jail cell, the State would literally have been without a motive of any kind. The insanity defense offered by attorneys Hardy and Cherikos also had several major flaws. The first was a legal error: you do not plead a defendant guilty and then try to prove that he is NOT guilty due to insanity. Hardy was fascinated by the famous Loeb and Leopold case in Chicago where defense attorneys had used a similar tactic. It had failed then, too, but Hardy had never handled a criminal case at the trial level before and it was understandable that his handling of the case was somewhat disorganized. Judge Hannah apparently accepted the novel-journal as fact despite its glaring contradictions, but he ruled that there was no evidence "that the defendant was suffering from any mental defect or disease." In short, the insanity defense failed miserably and it would have been less than miserable if Chuck had not rewritten so many of the exhibits in his jail cell.

With neither the State nor the defense offering a plausible explanation of the crime, we're left with the assumption that there was no reason for the crime. That's not possible. There is always a reason for every crime, whether the reason is easily recognizable or even understandable.

The parallel drawn between Chuck and Louie led to Dr. Goldstein's analysis of a form of suicide directed outwards at a mirror

image rather than inwards. Dr. Frederick Gibbs testified that Chuck was—and still is—suffering from diencephalic epilepsy which undoubtedly explains his periodic outbursts of naked violence. Though Chuck denies it, Bonnie and several other people stick to their story about the LSD in Chuck's drinking water the day of the crime. If all three of these principles are accepted objectively, an explanation of why the crime occurred is obvious.

A few hours before the crime was committed, Chuck drank two small sample bottles of Kentucky whiskey given him by Timmy Cox. The amount of alcohol totalled no more than two full shot glasses and while giving Chuck "a warm feeling" did not make him drunk. Timmy now denies giving him the whiskey, but Chuck insists that Timmy had taken the bottles from the home of a friend the night of the 26th of April during a teenage party in nearby Humboldt. After downing the liquor, the two boys, with Louie tagging along, hunted near the river behind the Cox house but failed to locate any game. They returned to the house where Chuck eagerly accepted an offered glass of cold well water. Louie offered him the water. Chuck continues to deny that the water was laced with LSD, but the presence of the drug would explain many unanswered questions. It may have served as the catalyst that caused the blurring of the lines between fantasy and reality in his mind. To a boy used to living in a self-made fantasy world, the hallucinogenic effect of the drug would have destroyed any link to the real world. It may have pushed his perception of reality so far out of line that the fictional hero of his novel-journal came to life for one brief, terrible moment. Coupled with his suicidal personality and the epilepsy, the combination had tragic consequences.

Chuck steadfastly refuses to admit he may have been drugged, but he would have been unaware that it was in the water. To someone who spent so much time in a fantasy world, he may not have even realized when he crossed from one world into another. Returning to the house after more than an hour hunting in nearby fields and with the taste of the whiskey still in his throat, he downed the water without questioning why Louie so graciously offered it. Men now living in Coles County who have done time with him at Menard and Hillsboro claim that he avoids all kinds of drugs, whether legal or illegal. Prisons are notorious for the huge amounts of illegal drugs available to the inmates on the black market and Menard is no exception. Everything from marijuana to heroin can be had for a price. Yet, the ex-inmates unanimously agree that Chuck avoids all forms of drugs "like the plague." He doesn't simply refuse to take them, he heads in the opposite direction whenever he sees any coming



his way. He seems terrified of them, of what they can do to a mind without proper safeguards. To someone who likes to be in control of every situation, the drugs represent a threat. They are capable of controlling his mind. He can't handle that.

The story of the LSD seems to be more than the mumbling of a Mattoon pill head. On the morning of the 27th of April, 1968, when Chuck walked into the driveway of the Cox house, he had no intention of killing anyone. Item one: he had less than one box of .22 ammunition in his pocket. On previous occasions, he had carried 200 or more rounds to the farm. Had he been intent on killing people instead of rabbits, it's obvious he would have taken more ammunition. Item two: he was on foot. The motor of his car was burnt out. The only means of leaving the farm was the old Cox family pickup truck. The Cox family name was stencilled on the side of it in bold white letters. Not a wise thing to steal. Item three: after his arrest, police searched his wallet. There was no money. The Cox family was on welfare at the time and had little, if any, money in the entire house. How could he possibly hope to escape without money? Item four: around his neck at the time of his arrest was an Instamatic 104 camera. Earlier in the day, as he had the previous Saturday, he had snapped pictures of Louise and she had taken several of him. He had also taken one very good photograph of live beef cattle inside a fence at the farm next to the Cox house. Normal, everyday types of pictures. A normal Saturday. People bent on slaughter generally don't carry cameras around their necks like tourists.

Saturday, the 27th of April, started like any other normal day in rural Mattoon. Only its ending was different. Why did it end so differently? What made a boy lose control for several awful minutes?

The drug seems to be the answer. It may not be the only answer, but coupled with the day-time fantasies and the epilepsy, it is certainly more plausible than the official version of the causes of the crime.

## CHAPTER SIX

The John A. Graham Correctional Center in Hillsboro opened in September of 1980. Designed to hold 750 men in 1-man cells, it is an ultra-modern, stylishly designed, and very secure facility. It is surrounded by 8 gun towers along with a very tall double fence topped with climb-proof mesh and razor sharp concertina wire. There are no bars. Bullet proof slabs of thick glass fill all the windows. It is spread over 80 acres and offers a quarter-mile track, a football field, softball fields, and an excellent vocational training program.

When I visited Chuck for the third time, it was my first look inside the new prison. I was searched at the Gate House much more thoroughly than I had been at Menard and I had to wait longer before they sent him to the visiting room, but the visiting area was similar to Menard's. One big difference was the large glass panels forming two walls of the room. Menard had been more enclosed with brick.

"Nice, huh?" he grinned as he sat down.

He had lost the ten extra pounds he wanted to lose and looked good. He was lean, almost thin.

"I've been running the track," he told me. "I go to the yard every evening and either walk or run for the two hours I'm out there. I feel good and I'm sticking to my diet. The food here is excellent, not like the shit they serve at Menard. All the cons and employees eat in the same chow hall so that helps keep the quality of the food up."

"You like it here better than Menard?"

He paused for a few seconds, "It's really hard to say. I like the living quarters here and I've got a great job working around some really nice people, plus the food is so much better and the population is so low that there's not much tension among the cons. The tension everybody feels in the crowded prisons disappears as soon as you

enter the door here. There are some drawbacks, though. I had a lot more freedom at Menard, there's more movement down there, and there's less security there than here."

"There's less there?" I asked. "But isn't Menard maximum security. This is medium security."

He laughed, "There's really no difference between maximum and medium. There are only 300 guys at Menard in max, the guys on Death Row and the ones with escapes on their records. It's only a formality to have your security reduced from max to medium. Even some of the escapees get it reduced. Almost everybody at Menard is medium security with about 200 in minimum. Here, 700 are medium and the rest minimum. The classification really doesn't mean all that much."

"But the prison itself is medium, isn't it? I mean there's no wall."

"No, there's no wall here. You ever hear of the Federal Penitentiary at Marion? When they closed Alcatraz, they had to put 500 of their most dangerous prisoners and their worst escape risks someplace, so they built Marion. It's surrounded by a double fence, just like here. Walled prisons are obsolete. The wall itself cuts down on the guard's visibility while a fence increase their visibility. The most maximum security prison in the country is surrounded by a double fence. That should tell you something."

I motioned toward the big windows, "No bars?"

He nodded, "Another feature of increased security."

I laughed, "You're putting me on, right?"

"No," he said very seriously. "When you have bars in a window, a hack saw blade is just as good as a key. Here, there are no bars. If you want to go through a window here, you need an anti-tank gun. Hell, at Menard, one guy sawed his way out of the visiting room while he was on a nighttime cleanup detail. Another six cut bars out of the Employees Kitchen area in the early morning hours and got away. Altogether, there were about 80 escapes during the time I was there. Wherever you have bars, you can find a way to chop them away if you want out bad enough. With these bullet-proof windows, there's no way to cut yourself free. You've got to blow the whole damn window out and there's no way you can do that quietly. This is about the most escape-proof place I've been in. They can call it anything they want, it's far more secure than Menard."

"Have there been any escapes from here?"

"No, and there won't be either. You can't get anywhere near the fence without being seen. It's not like a wall where you can approach it using the wall itself to block the guard's vision. If there ever are

any escapes from Hillsboro, it'll be from the outside work details. Nobody's leaving from inside."

"You said a little while ago that you had more freedom of movement at Menard. Why is that? I would think your mobility would be less in a walled prison."

"Remember me telling you about the riot at Pontiac? There were 5 guards in the cellhouse at the time: the 3 they hacked apart, the woman they raped, and another male who pretended to be dead. There were 800 inmates. That comes to about 1 guard for every 160 inmates. The East Cell House at Menard holds 1,000 inmates with a staff of 5 or 6 guards. About 200 to 1. Here, there are 50 inmates with at least 2 and sometimes 3 guards to each Housing Unit. Guard to con ratio: 25 to 1. Which do you think offers the most security and surveillance? Hell, at Menard, you might see 2 or 300 inmates walking around the streets at any one time. Some of them are legitimate in their movement, but many aren't. Here, you'll almost never see a con walking alone. You're either on your assignment, in your Housing Unit, on the yard, or in the chow hall. You can't just walk around here like I used to at Menard. You're escorted by a guard almost constantly. This is tighter than Menard ever was."

"Why did you put in to come up here? Why didn't you stay at Menard?"

"I was doing all right at Menard but I just got tired of being there. I could go almost anyplace inside the walls that I wanted and nobody said shit to me about it, but I felt burnt out. I'd advanced as far as I could and the Warden seemed reluctant to let me earn my way to minimum security so I felt I needed a change. I liked nearly all of the people I worked around at the Employee's Commissary and actually felt homesick the first month I was up here. That first month was the roughest: a lot more security than I was used to and the sudden loss of a lot of friends. I honestly came very close to transferring back just to be among the friends I'd made over the years at Menard. I'd been at Menard so long, it was like home to me. I never dreamed I could feel that way about a prison, but when you've been locked up for 40% of your life, you adapt to your environment and make it the best you can. I truly regard a large number of employees and cons as friends and I miss a lot of them."

"How do you adapt to prison? Most of the employees I've talked to about you have said your personality is that of a recently imprisoned man, rather than someone who's spent almost half his life

behind bars. They say you don't have the little quirks that mark most long-timers. What do you do to keep your sanity?"

"Doing time is like lifting weights. It's either too much for you or it'll make you stronger. You adapt or you crack. I did 228 days in a cell by myself in the Coles County Jail and it was easy: I imagined I was a POW and the enemy wanted me to crack. I've always reacted well to outside threats and the fantasy of being a POW hardened my resolve not to crack. At Menard, I didn't have to pretend to be anything. I worked in the library and read 5 or 6 books a week to keep my mind occupied, volunteered for extra work details, anything to keep my thoughts off the bars. I spent hundreds of hours building castles and huge mansions in my mind, laying out cities, recalling the towns where I'd lived, trying to remember the color of each house in the neighborhood. Anything, anything at all that keeps the mind busy is worthwhile."

We chatted for a while and he drank another diet soda. An article had appeared in the *Mattoon Journal Gazette* in early March of 1981 and I was sure he had seen it but I had never asked him for his reaction to it. The article had covered nearly half a page and was generally a rehash of past events with Mr. Cox announcing still another petition drive not only to oppose Chuck's parole in 1982 but to try to get him shipped back to Menard in the mistaken belief that he would then be in maximum security. Rick Brown, chief of legislative affairs for the Department of Corrections, defended the transfer in the article noting that "Let's face it—he doesn't belong in a max joint." State Rep. Larry Stuffle agreed with Cox and offered to personally present the petition to Governor Thompson. I thought the article might be a sore point with Chuck. I was wrong. It only mildly disgusted him.

"Yeah, I read it," he said with distaste. "What's that guy do, live in the alley behind the newspaper office?"

"I didn't think you'd take it very well."

"Oh, I can take it well enough. I just get disgusted reading bullshit. Don't they have a file system at that paper? If they do, their reporters should check through it before they print garbage. They might be able to get at least a few of their facts straight by doing a little research."

Chuck didn't seem angry but then I'd rarely seen him express anger during the more than a year that I'd known him. Any temper he might have—and I'm sure he has one—is kept in check. His attitude wasn't anger. It was simple disgust.

"Mr. Cox said I was living better in here than many people outside



of prison," Chuck continued. "What a disgusting thing to say. He's upset because I have a TV set and a radio. That's living better than free people? Would he like to trade places? Does he think so little of his family that he feels having a TV and radio will make up for being apart from them? It doesn't make it up for me. I miss my family very much. I care about my family. I have two sisters and a brother in addition to my parents and my other relatives. I have 13 nieces and nephews I don't see more than twice a year. Is having a radio supposed to take the place of my family? What a shallow, shallow life he must lead if he thinks a radio and a TV is worth your family."

"Mrs. Cox quotes you as saying from the witness stand that you would 'get' the rest of the family. Is that true?"

He snorted, then almost grinned, "What do they do, belong to the Lie of the Month Club? Everytime one of these articles comes out, there's something new in it. If the people at the Journal-Gazette will ever take time to research their facts, this nonsense will stop showing up in print. You're familiar with my case, how many times did I take the stand to testify? Once. The only time I ever took the stand was to answer a half-dozen questions during my competency hearing in early August of 1968. That hearing lasted about 40 minutes and was nothing more than a formality gotten out of the way so the trial could be scheduled. Other than that one time, I never took the stand. Never. She's lying. Other than at the competency hearing, I never got near the stand. I never made any threats against that family or anyone else. If I'd wanted to 'get' the rest of the family, why didn't they get 'got' in April? I get so very tired of their bullshit lies and the really unfortunate thing about it is that people who don't know anything about the case read these fairy tales in the paper and accept them as fact simply because they don't know any better. Ask yourself this, though: if I'd gotten on the witness stand and threatened to kill six more people, do you think Judge Hannah would have been reluctant to impose the death penalty rather than a prison term?"

I have viewed micro-film copies of the Mattoon and Charleston newspaper articles covering the entire length of the proceedings against Chuck. They, and the court records I've been able to see, confirm that Chuck briefly took the stand only once throughout the entire proceedings from April through December of 1968. He never made any threats in court and, in fact, seldom said anything at all in court. No verbal or written threats appear anywhere in the articles or in the official files.

Chuck was shaking his head, "It's hard to believe. I'd always

thought newspapers printed only fact. I was wrong. They'll print anything."

"You know they're circulating petitions again, how do you feel about that?"

He shook his head wearily, "I honestly don't care. I never see the damn things and unless somebody sends me an article about them, I don't even know they're around. I really feel bad about them being posted in Mattoon stores, though. I have a lot of relatives in the area and I feel embarrassed for them when they enter one of those stores and see that filth hanging on the wall. I assume it makes Mr. Cox feel like he's really doing something to me, but he's not. He's only hurting innocent people who haven't done anything to him. I feel bad that my relatives and friends suffer for something they had nothing to do with, but the petitions have no other effect on me. They're a waste of time."

"He seems to be putting a lot of time and effort into them."

"Sure, he can do that. Members of my family had a big meeting two years ago and discussed circulating counter-petitions but finally decided they couldn't afford to take the time: they all work for a living."

"Do you think the petitions to Governor Thompson will have any effect?"

"It's hard to say. I know Thompson is a law-and-order man, but he undoubtedly knows there's really not much difference between Menard and Hillsboro as far as security is concerned. It's been the policy of the Department of Corrections to allow men to earn their freedom in the past. I hope Governor Thompson continues that policy."

"I can understand Mr. Cox's motives for doing what he's doing. He isn't accomplishing what he thinks he's accomplishing but I can understand his actions, however misguided they may be. He no doubt feels a lot of guilt. Half his family was killed and he, the Man of the House, was nowhere in sight when it happened. In our society, the man is the leader of the household, the bread winner, the protector. Mr. Cox has probably tortured himself with guilt feelings that, in some way, he let his family down. He wasn't around when it happened. He didn't prevent it. He must have run through his mind a hundred times: 'If only I'd been home. If only I'd been there, I could have stopped that boy.' He feels guilt from having spanked the kids in the past, from the problems with Louie. When someone dies like this, you always remember the bad things you said or did to them more than the good. You feel guilt. Some people call it Survivor's Syndrome. A lot of Death-Camp survivors feel it. Soldiers

who lose friends in combat feel it. Believe me, I know how he feels. I think sometimes about all the times I've mistreated or taken advantage of people, of how I picked on Sean for several months in early '68. I can still remember the expression on his face in the car on the way back from the hospital after I'd pulled his arm out of socket while we were playing. It still hurts me even though he no longer remembers it. I feel guilt, a lot of guilt. I'm sorry about the crime, sorry it ever happened, but it's over now. I can't change anything now as much as I'd like to and I've learned to live with it. I've learned to live in the present, not in the past. People who are dead, are dead. We have to concern ourselves with the living. I've put all this through my mind many times in the past and I'm at peace with myself. I sincerely hope Mr. Cox can learn to do the same and stop torturing himself. I think his mental health will improve when he learns to live in the present and accept things as they are."

"There seems to be some concern on his part that you intend to return to Mattoon once you're paroled. He's expressed the opinion that you'll go looking for Louise as soon as you're paroled."

"Bullshit," Chuck scoffed. "My returning to Mattoon makes about as much sense as the head of the Ku Klux Klan donning his robes and walking through a colored ghetto late at night. I can't return to Mattoon. I can never go back there. I have no desire to go back. I didn't lose anything there so I sure as hell don't need to go back to look for it."

"You no longer have any feelings for Louise?"

"Sure, I have feelings for her. I have a sincere wish that she's happy. I hope her husband is taking as good care of her as I would have. I have no desire to see anything bad happen to her, but I also seldom give her any thought anymore. What we had together is over. We don't need each other. She's married with a couple of kids now and I've got my right hand. We're both happy."

As the interview wound down, I asked Chuck about his future. I wanted to know his plans, how he intended to deal with the parole issue, where he wanted to go once he made parole.

"I'll keep doing what I've been doing. I've kept my record in here as clean as possible because I intend to get out of here the way people should get out: by earning it. I've progressed one step at a time and I'm going to keep progressing until they finally realize they can release me without fear that I'll commit any other crimes. As far as the Parole Board hearings are concerned, I'm not worried there, either. I've got a surprise for them next time. I've been doing my homework in that area and I've got a big surprise for them at the next hearing. They're not going to pull the bullshit they pulled

last year. As far as where I'm going once I'm freed, let's just let that ride for a while. I have a place to live and a job waiting for me out of state but I'd rather not go into it any detail right now.

"I will say this, though. I will be free. Human beings aren't meant to live in cages, we're meant to live free. Even animals should live free. I never noticed my freedom before. I took it for granted, and now that it's gone, I intend to fight to win it back. My freedom is the most precious thing to me right now and I intend to hang on to it once it's in my grasp again.

"I will be free."

There is little doubt that Thomas Charles Fuller II, Register No. C-10244, will be freed from prison. The only question is when. When will it be best for him and for society in general? When he is too old to lead a normal life? When his mind has deteriorated? When the psychiatrists and psychologists no longer write good reports for him?

The opinion expressed by a number of people that Chuck is a threat to them is an unreal fear. If anyone has to be careful of his life upon release into the free community, it is Chuck. Men on parole are not allowed to even handle a weapon, let alone possess one. Simple possession violates the terms of parole and sends the man back to prison to complete his sentence. In Chuck's case, a parole violation would be a sentence of death with no hope of further parole. He would die behind bars. Since Chuck is certainly not a stupid man, he would have to remain unarmed. Unarmed in a country of 100,000,000 firearms. He has good reason to keep his parole plans secret. A real threat does exist: the possibility that someone, either a relative of the Cox family or a self-styled vigilante, may try to kill him. In prison, he's relatively safe. In the free world, he may not be safe. He may very well lose his life shortly after release.

I hope not. Before I first met him, I had no sympathy for him, only curiosity. I wanted to see the man so many people talk about and sign petitions against. It was a morbid curiosity, I admit, but one I wanted to satisfy. I'm glad I did. I have a new friend. He's a likeable little fellow. He's pleasant, polite, soft-spoken, eager to make a joke of any situation, easy to talk to, a good listener. I feel at ease with him.

When I visit him again, I may take my children along. He really loves children. I think they'll like him.

Chuck Fuller was living in the Honor Dorm inside Menard's walls on the afternoon of the 4th of September, 1980, when a Rube Goldberg contraption of wires hooked to a TV set, a radio, and a stereo

exploded in flames in one of the other cells. Chuck noticed smoke coming from the cell and ran outside the unlocked dorm to summon help. Cons and guards emptied two extinguishers on the fire but the little dorm filled with thick black smoke and poison gas from the melting appliances and bedding and the guard in charge, Captain Doug Severs, ordered the men with him to leave the building. Once outside, it was discovered that one or more inmate night workers were missing and probably still asleep inside the dorm. Chuck immediately ran back inside and, groping through the blackness with a folded handkerchief held over his nose and mouth, checked cell after cell for occupants. On the upper level of the 2-story building, he blindly staggered down a line of cells, jerking open the wooden doors one by one in a search for fellow convicts. In cell 24, he found Leo Crutcher, Register No. A93157. Crutcher was on medication and sleeping soundly. Chuck woke him and ordered him out of the building. The search continued. In cell 23, Chuck's co-worker at the Employees' Commissary, Edward Smith, C-10833, was also awakened and ordered out. In the next three cells, Chuck located three Boiler House night workers: Johnson, A-86279, Williams, C-80378, and Bennett, A-86167. All three men were asleep and Williams was also on medication to help him sleep even more soundly. All five men were awakened and ordered out of the building. Chuck followed them outside, gasping for air and hacking up black particles from the smoke.

Two of the men whose lives he saved later thanked him.

The Administration never even wrote a report about it. There was no letter of commendation.

Convict life is cheap.



## EPILOG

On a trip from Arkansas to Champaign to visit old friends, I stopped in Mattoon to deliver messages from Chuck to a few people. It was a warm May day so I pulled into the parking lot of a Dairy Queen for a cold soda. The place was full of school age kids and I had to wait in line for a few minutes. As I neared the counter, I noticed a small cluster of teens signing their names to a paper. Before I even looked, I knew what it was. The first time petitions were circulated in 1979, they were nicely done on poster boards and hung in stores in 6 counties. The petition on the counter before me had been done on Xerox paper, the photos of the deceased mere outlines, almost like caricatures. A pimply-faced boy with long greasy hair was signing his name below about twenty other names.

As I came abreast of him, I asked the boy, "What's that thing about?"

"It's to keep some murderer in prison. We're all signing it."

"What's the guy's name?"

"William Fuller. He killed six people with a hatchet."

"He did not," interjected the girl at his side. "He used a shotgun. I read about it."

"A hatchet," Pimple Face insisted. "My dad was on his jury."

The kids argued as I neared the counter to place my order.

"What's he look like?" I asked. "You ever see him?"

"I saw pictures of him," the girl said. "He's a big colored guy, about 6 foot tall."

"He is not," Pimple Face responded. "He's a white guy with real big muscles like a weight lifter. That's how he chopped 'em all up so easy. My dad said so."

The kids walked off, still arguing. My order came and I gave the girl behind the counter a dollar bill. She handed me the change

and took the order from the little boy behind me. I opened my purse to drop in the change. The girl behind the counter had her back to me. I slid the signed pages of the petition into my purse and left.

On the highway to Champaign, I rolled down my window, tore the pages into little pieces, and let the wind carry them away.

I'm sorry I signed the first one, Chuck.

## **COURT'S MEMORANDUM ORDER**

### **DECEMBER 10, 1968**

“Thomas Charles Fuller II, aged 18, was indicted in Coles County upon the charges of five separate murders committed on the 27th day of April, 1968, consisting of the killing, by shooting, of five children, namely: Louis Cox aged 16, Theresa Cox aged 9, Mary Cox aged 8, Gary Cox aged 7, and Kenneth Cox aged 5. By stipulation all cases were consolidated and presented at the same hearing.

“The defendant, throughout the proceedings, was represented by able and qualified counsel consisting of the Public Defender, William Cherikos, of several years experience as a lawyer and over two years as public defender, and special appointed counsel, Whitney Hardy, experienced as a trial lawyer. These attorneys devoted a great amount of time and pursued all avenues in the preparation of his case. In fact Hardy devoted all his time to this case from the time of his appointment until the conclusion of the hearing, as evidenced by his time report filed with the Court. The defendant expressed satisfaction with this service.

“Following arraignment, and a plea of not guilty, upon order of the Court, the defendant was examined by two qualified psychiatrists and one qualified psychologist, appointed by the Court, to determine if he be mentally competent to proceed to trial. After examination they reported the defendant as being able to understand the nature of the charges, the consequences of the same if he be found guilty, and able to cooperate with his counsel. The defendant and his counsel concurred in the report.

“The case came on for trial, and following the empanelling of the jury the defendant moved to withdraw his plea of not guilty and to enter a plea of guilty. Before allowing his motion or accepting his plea he was fully and carefully admonished as to his rights and the possible consequences of his act. His counsel also advised the

Court that they had fully discussed the matter with the defendant, that he fully understood the nature and possible consequences of his act and approved of the action. The parents of the defendant were also present in open court with the defendant, and they advised the Court they had discussed the defendant's proposed action with the defendant and his counsel, and that they concurred in the proposed action. The defendant advised the Court he understood his action, and its possible consequences, and that it was his desire to so act, and that he was doing so because he was in fact guilty. Accordingly the Court allowed his motion to withdraw his plea of not guilty, and accepted his plea of guilty in each of said cases, and entered judgment upon his plea in each of said cases.

"Thereafter all of the cases, consolidated for hearing, were set down for hearing upon the matter of aggravation and mitigation of punishment. By stipulation the defendant presented his evidence first, followed by that for the People. The hearing was an extended one, continuing over a period of six days. The evidence consisted of testimony of lay witnesses relative to the life and conduct of the defendant prior to, at the time of and following the commission of the acts, together with voluminous testimony of expert witnesses, including psychologists and psychiatrists of national repute. Included was a video tape recording of two interviews with the defendant conducted by Dr. Joseph Satten, an eminent psychiatrist of the Menninger Foundation. One of these with the defendant in his natural state, the other while under the influence of sodium amytol. Also, writings of the defendant in the form of journals, diaries, novels and letters were presented.

"A study of all the evidence, as well as the Court's own observation of the defendant in court, reveals him to be a young man of neat and personable appearance. The Court carefully observed from video tape the defendant's personal appearance, his manner, and the explanation of the occurrences, as he was examined upon various occasions by Dr. Joseph Satten of the Menninger Foundation over a period of five days in Topeka, Kansas. He was first examined while free from any drug, then while under the influence of sodium amytol. While Dr. Satten stated he was not wholly cooperative, yet he did rather fully and completely review his entire life. This included his home and school life. It included his association with the Cox family, and particularly his relation with and affection for Louise Cox. It disclosed his frustration arising out of the opposition of Louise's parents to their marriage, as well as his particular dislike for Louise's brother Louis. He likewise gave his version of the tragic occurrences and his explanation of the reasons for the same. These reasons center

around a weird and fanciful idea that he was freeing Louise from what he termed undue oppression from her parents, to the end that he and Louise might marry.

"His journal is probably the most revealing of his inward thoughts and motivations. There he displays at least average, if not better than average, intelligence. He had ambitions. He desired to become a writer, as evidenced by three attempts at novel writing as well as several efforts at poetry. While these attempts were feeble from a literary standpoint, they did evidence an imagination. Crude as they were, at times there was an occasional unusual display of expression and imagery. For the most part they dealt with fantasy, tending toward the morbid side of life, and ranging from a display of insecurity and immaturity to moments of tall stature, but never reaching a level of reality. One gets the impression from his voluminous writings that he is seeking a vent for the release of his pent up feelings of passion, anger, and, at times, even humor. Within himself he seeks an audience unattainable in real life.

"From an overall review of his life we see an immature boy of ambition, with undeveloped talent lost for want of guidance. He expresses a desire and need, as well as respect, for authority as opposed to the permissive way of life to which he was relegated. His forlorn cry for discipline and guidance is like a voice in the desert, heard now for the first time by the world, but all too late. We find him lonely for companionship, and as a result, a built up feeling of grandeur within himself. These feelings or attitudes are variously described by the psychologists and psychiatrists.

"Dr. Satten diagnosed the defendant as suffering from a latent schizophrenia, otherwise described as pseudo-psychopathic. According to this doctor he lacked perception of reality, the actual present being distorted, and he lacked capacity to control his hostile impulses.

"Dr. Milton Baumann concluded from his examination that the defendant was not psychotic; that he was competent. It was his opinion that he did not lack the capacity to appreciate the criminality of his conduct or to conform his conduct to the requirements of the law, and that he knew right from wrong. Dr. William Haines expressed a like opinion.

"It was the conclusion of Dr. Robert Schulman that the defendant functioned within the average or bright normal range of intellectual abilities, but at the same time showed areas of poor judgment in the social sense. At times he had difficulty in dealing with abstract conceptual material, and was arbitrary in his intellectual approach. With him it was either black or white and he could see no gray.



All this, says Dr. Schulman, indicated a lack of flexibility, rendering it difficult for him to adjust to his environment. He had a feeling of grandiosity. As a result tensions built up within him which eventually exploded.

"Dr. Frederic A. Gibbs, an expert in the field of electroencephalographic reading, expressed the opinion that the defendant was subject to what was called diencephalic epilepsy, which was not a mental disease.

"Dr. Groves B. Smith, an eminent psychiatrist and criminologist, characterized him as one suffering from a personality disorder, a non-psychotic mental disorder, as distinguished from a schizophrenic disorder. But, says Dr. Smith, it was not a mental defect or disorder. It was a disorder called schizoid personality. While the defendant, says Dr. Smith, had the ability to coordinate, he refused to do so. His weird thoughts and eccentric ideas were not the product of a mental illness.

"From the total testimony of the experts we do not find any support to the idea that the defendant was suffering from any mental defect or disease which deprived him of the capacity to appreciate the criminality of his conduct, or to conform his conduct to the requirements of the law. A consideration of his own statement, as made to Dr. Satten, as observed by the Court from video tape, leads to the same conclusion.

"His journal discloses that he had built up a strong feeling against the entire Cox family, except Louise and Timmy. In the journal we find expressions indicating a plan of disposing of the entire family, except Louise, and then fleeing to Canada with her. Apparently he felt that Louise was being persecuted by her family in the form of being overworked and imposed upon by them. This thought seems to have prayed upon him, and in his desire to have that which he wanted, he conceived this plan. Yet he had given no form to the plan. From the record we are unable to determine that he had in mind, this particular morning, the carrying out of any such plan. If the defendant's version be accepted, the plan was triggered by what he terms to be an attack by Louis and the two little children upon Louise while upstairs, and the refusal of Louise's mother to allow him, the defendant, to go to her aid. This alleged attack appears to have been little more than a scuffle. The details of the execution of the plan we shall not review, except in one aspect.

"On the morning of the shooting, and shortly after this scuffle, the defendant, together with Louis, for whom he had a great dislike, and Gary and Kenneth went out behind the barn, allegedly to shoot birds. According to the defendant it was at Louis's insistence that

they went out back of the barn. There he first shot Louis and then Gary and Kenneth, all as a part of one continuous course of conduct. The shooting of Gary and Kenneth seems to have arisen from fear of their reporting the shooting of Louis.

"The defendant then returned to the house where he got a drink of water, and then talked to Louise. It appears that he went to the pump outside the house and brought Louise a bucket of water. Then, soon after, he went out into the yard where Theresa and Mary were playing, and asked if they'd like to shoot rats, and took them to the crib. On his way, he made sure of keeping himself between them and the bodies of the boys. Once in the crib he shot and killed them. The evidence indicates this was because of fear they would discover the others. This act constituted the second continuous course of conduct. Thus it appears that while there were five separate crimes, there were only two separate and distinct courses of punishable conduct, and that they were disassociated with each other. In the intervening time the defendant had had an opportunity to contemplate his former act.

"There can be no doubt that the defendant was fully aware and conscious of the nature of his act, and that he then fully intended to do that which he did do, yet it is doubtful if he had any actual concept of the enormity of his criminal conduct. It was not an act resulting from a sudden heat of passion, or from fear. It is disclosed by his journal the thought of disposing of all or part of the family had entered his mind at an earlier date. It may be that his desire and determination to have what he wanted, and to have it now, dulled his appreciation of the enormity of his crime, but it is likewise clear that he had the ability to control his conduct, if he elected to do so, and that he knew the consequences of his act. The fact that he chose to allow his personal desire and pent up passion to control his conduct offers no defense to his crime.

"In the light of the record and the testimony of the experts, and in the light of the defendant's youth and the fact he has no past criminal record, we do not deem this to be that "proper case" for the imposition of the extreme penalty. According to the experts there is a possibility of rehabilitation of the defendant, if given the proper facilities. That is the problem and obligation of the State. But the nature and enormity of the crime demands that the defendant receive substantial punishment commensurate with the crime, but not to be invoked as a matter of vengeance.

"As stated we find two separate and distinct acts of criminal misconduct, the first being the shooting of Louis, Gary and Kenneth. Then following an interval of time, there was the second occurrence.

We find no evidence indicating that he returned to the house for the express purpose of shooting Theresa and Mary, or other members of the family. To so conclude would be purely speculation. But upon leaving the house and seeing Theresa and Mary he may well have thought they might find and report the finding of Louis, Gary and Kenneth, and so he determined to eliminate them. This fits in the pattern of his thinking, his inability to adapt his thinking to reality, not reasoning that his crime must sooner or later be discovered. The second act of criminal misconduct was that of shooting Theresa and Mary.

"Following the reasoning of the Supreme Court in *People v Golsen*, 32 Ill. (2) 398, there were only two punishable courses of conduct, notwithstanding there were five separate and distinct murders. The first was that involving the killing of Louis, Gary, and Kenneth, (Nos. 68-Y-289, 68-Y-292 and 68-Y-293), and the second involving the killing of Theresa and Mary, (Nos. 68-Y-290 and 68-Y-291).

"The Court is mindful of the fact, as stated in substance by the Supreme Court, (*People v. Harpole*, 239 N.E. (2) 471) that the defendant has no prior criminal record, that he is a minor, and that the purpose of modern day penology is the rehabilitation of the offender and at the same time adequately punishing him for his misconduct and safeguarding the public from further offenses. The Court also has in mind the supervising powers of the Board of Pardons and Paroles. It is with all these considerations in mind that the Court reaches its conclusions as to the punishment to be imposed."

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